GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN THE IBCR'S PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAMMES

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I. INTRODUCTION

The participation of children has, to various extents, always been part of the International Bureau for Children's Rights (hereinafter "the IBCR" or "the Bureau") practices.[1] Although an increasing number of projects include clear results with respect to participation, the participation of children[2] has been considered for several initiatives implemented up until now, specifically as a means to reach objectives relating to the protection system, rather than programming. These initiatives mainly focus on:

- Making children aware of their rights

- Enabling children to gather data

- Talking with children about specific topics[3] or their experience with those involved in the protection system

- Letting children speak at events for children's rights

While these initiatives should be better known and leveraged by personnel, specifically those directly involved in implementing programmes, they could certainly be improved. In fact, we have noted that children are mostly engaged at the project implementation phase. However, as illustrated below, children can participate at different times throughout a project's cycle, depending on the culture, organisational context, the country's specificities, the objectives of the process and the resources available.

PROJECT CYCLE

Identification of issues at hand
(Strategic analysis of the situation)

Prioritisation and identification of possible solutions
(Project development)

Lessons learned
(Application and best practices)

Implementation
(Actions)

Follow-up and assessment
(Adjustments)

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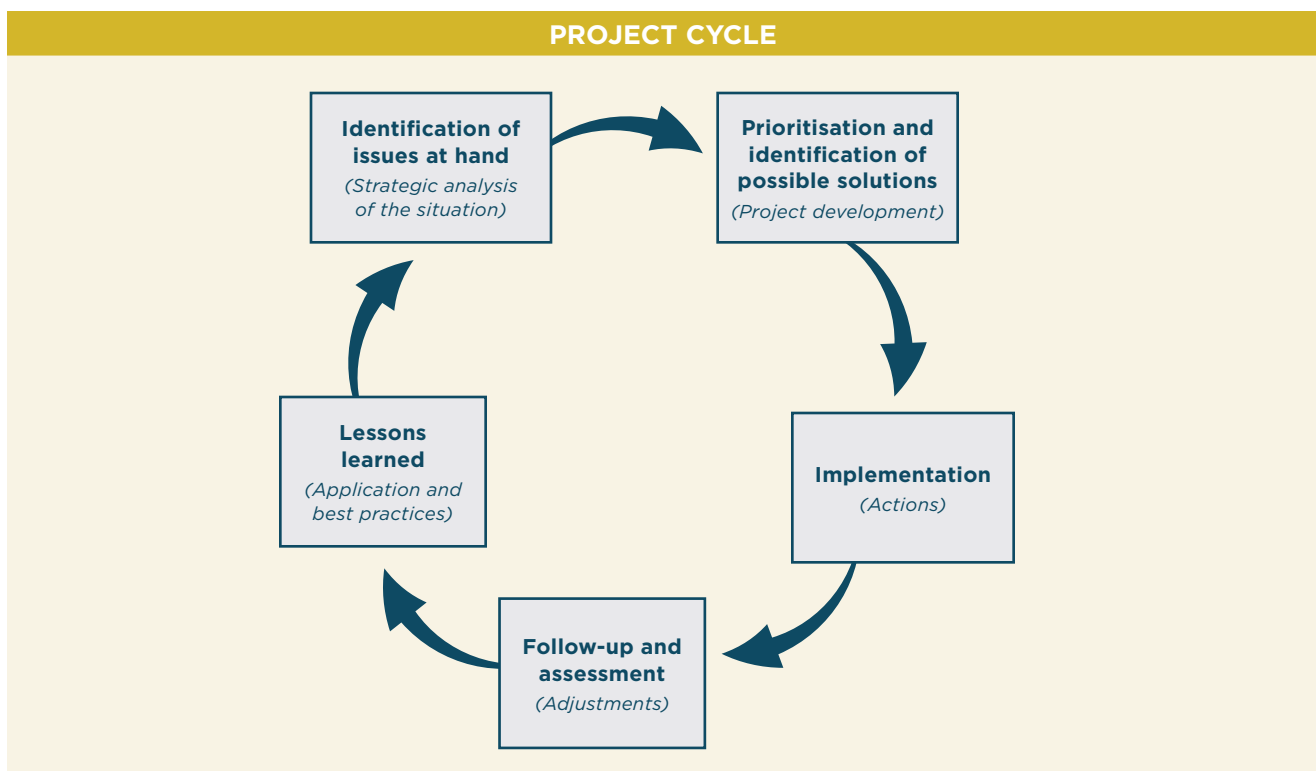
1. Some examples of IBCR projects that included the participation of children are presented in Appendix 2.

2. A child is a person under 18, as defined in Article 1 of the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Boys and girls are included in the definition. The IBCR has chosen to emphasize the participation of girls in this document.

3. For example, to provide insight on tools or training modules regarding children's rights.

It is important to keep in mind that the principle of participation is part of a learning process during which the IBCR can progressively assess the various components of its programming and operations and increase and/or improve the participation of children. Moreover, personnel must learn to properly define the scope of the concept in order to best identify and implement project activities for which the participation of children could make a difference toward achieving results, as well as determine favourable conditions for children to truly participate.

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE *GUIDELINES*

Defining the institutional direction for the participation of children in the Bureau's programming[4] is part of a larger process aimed at standardising and documenting ways to increase the quality and relevance of projects.

The principle of child participation is at the heart of the IBCR's initiatives. Our approach is based on the four main principles of the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*[5] (hereinafter "the Convention" or the "CRC"), which include the participation of children. The IBCR's 2017-2020 strategic plan therefore specifies that "We value the right of girls and boys to express their views freely and to be actors in their own development, while taking into account their developmental capabilities, well-being and best interest."[6] It was thus important to reflect this in an institutional document.

All of the IBCR's projects should include a clear strategy for child participation throughout a project's cycle. On one hand, the objective of the *Guidelines for the participation of children* (hereinafter "the *Guidelines*") is for team members (hereinafter "personnel")[7] and partners to understand the Bureau's vision on children's rights to participate, as well as the guiding values and principles of this vision.

On the other hand, the IBCR wishes to improve the efficiency of this right throughout a project's cycles by providing teams with the necessary tools to identify the best opportunities to include the participation of children through an informed and adapted process that is respectful of children's best interests. Finally, the *Guidelines* provide personnel with basic elements for a compelling argument about the added value of child participation, an argument that may positively influence the vision of our partners with respect to this fundamental right and may lead to meaningful, innovative and promising integration initiatives.

The *Guidelines* document is an addition to other standardised Bureau documents, such as the *IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy*.[8] It is a living document that will evolve and be perfected over time.

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4. The document only broaches the taking into account of the IBCR's participation principle. The participation of children in the Bureau's operations is a long-term goal and this aspect may eventually be included in a subsequent, improved version of the *Guidelines* or be the subject of a different document.

5. United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, G.A. resolution 44/25 U.N. GAOR Supp. No. 49, U.N. Doc A/44/49m 1989 (entry into force: 2 September 1990). http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

6. *Strategic Plan 2017-2020*, IBCR, page 5; http://www.ibcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Plan-strategique-2017-2020-AN_web..pdf

7. This includes all persons employed by the Bureau or those who volunteer on projects, persons hired to work on consulting or voluntary cooperation mandates, as well as members of the Management team and the Board of Directors.

8. *IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy*, IBCR, April 2016, http://www.ibcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/IBCR-Child-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf; the institutional framework document on gender equality did not yet exist at the time of producing these guidelines.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

The document contains four sections.

In the first two, we present the *Guidelines'* purpose and main frame of reference on which it is based, with regard to international laws but also in terms of the IBCR's vision and values.

The third section broaches the definition of the right to participate, as well as the various forms this participation could take.

The fourth section is the core of the document. It describes the components to integrate participation into a project's cycle. For each component, a series of questions is proposed to help inform decisions about child participation opportunities and choices about how this right will be taken into account during the project.

Some useful tools are also proposed in appendix[9].

RECIPIENTS

First and foremost, this document is intended for IBCR personnel, including members of the Board of Directors because of their role in promoting child participation and their involvement in applying the *Guidelines* to the Bureau's know-how.

At another level, the document is also for partner organisations and structures with which the Bureau works with to implement child participation processes. Although we cannot impose these guidelines on our partners, the IBCR nonetheless wishes to share them in order to encourage their participation. This is why the IBCR encourages a constant dialogue with partners with respect to issues surrounding child participation and implements coaching and specific and strategic intervention mechanisms should minimum standards not be met.

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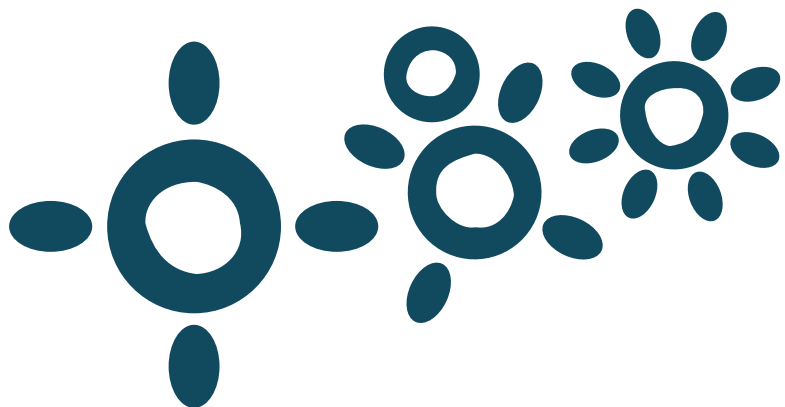
9.   Other tools are available in the various documents listed in the bibliography. In addition, the Bureau will prepare a workbook identifying the main tools to be used in order to increase child participation; this workbook will serve as a complement to these *Guidelines*.

II. FRAME OF REFERENCE

THE IBCR'S VISION OF CHILD PARTICIPATION

The IBCR's general mission is to contribute to the protection and promotion of children's rights in line with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and its optional protocols. For these rights to become reality, the Bureau helps reinforce protection systems and the skills of those who work directly with children.

Because the Bureau is a technical expertise organisation that does not offer services directly to children, the question of child participation is particular. It is thus with this particularity in mind that programming initiatives must take into account the issues surrounding child participation, according to our mission and policies.

The IBCR sees participation as both a means and an outcome. The Bureau's vision is that girls and boys act as agents of change by playing an active part in their life and must be allowed to express their views and take part in the various decision processes that pertain to them. Our basic premise is that children, whether individually or as a group, should be involved in the IBCR's activities, in the different steps and in different ways, in order to increase their efficiency, relevance, sustainability and impact. That being said, this participation must also meet the criteria and rigorous assessment process used to include other children's rights, with an aim to protect the best interests of each child.

> **Our vision is for girls and boys to be agents of change by playing an active part in their life and in the decisions that pertain to them. For this, children must be allowed to express their views and take part in the various decision processes that aim to protect children's rights.**

The IBCR favours an approach based on information, communication and empowerment. In addition to increasing the quality of our actions, this approach reinforces the child as a person, her or his voice and views on the various issues that directly or indirectly affect her or him. In doing so, greater independence, an improved sense of responsibility and better self-esteem are possible, in line with each child's capacities. The ultimate goal is that the Bureau's actions and products combine children's views and perspectives so that they may feel valued and heard. For the child, the goal is that she or he eventually be able to decide and act for her or himself and that this capacity be reinforced over time.

Thus, the Bureau feels that there are very tight links between the concepts of participation and empowerment as they reinforce themselves mutually, adding a transformative aspect to child participation. By this, the institutional vision differs from traditional protectionist views, where the child is reduced to being just a passive, vulnerable beneficiary, subjected to adult protection and decisions. This kind of vision requires that adults know how to communicate, discuss and collaborate with children in such a way so as to guide their personal development and help them to exercise their individual and group rights. This also implies that children be able to communicate with their peers in order to share experiences and have a positive influence on each other.

Child participation: An added value

Participation is both a guiding principle of children's rights and an active practice of citizenship.[10] Therefore, it is not just a theory that is stated in a restrictive international law. The effectiveness of the participation principle is a means to obtain relevant information on issues surrounding children, as well as to highlight their contribution and reinforce their ability to take action, both individually and as a group.

Today, there is no longer any doubt that children are in the best position to express their various views and influence the decisions surrounding their needs and situation, as well as speak of their interests, what they like and dislike, etc. The effectiveness of the right to participate therefore implies that children play an active role in defining their well-being and who and how can contribute to it.

Experience has shown that girls and boys can, depending on their various evolving capacities, effectively participate in several activities, including research, consultation, institutional management, services and personnel assessments, production of training tools, defence campaigns, project management and implementation, drafting of policies, coaching of peers, leading student associations and children's parliaments, drafting of bills, etc. Thus, the participation of children brings added value for both the children and adults involved.

Participation enables children to:

- **Develop their independence by:**
  – **Highlighting their skills**
  – **Reinforcing their self-esteem**
  – **Reinforcing their sense of responsibility and their critical sense**
  – **Reinforcing their ability to influence their own life and community**

- **Take part in their own protection and that of their peers by:**
  – **Expressing their views and sharing their experiences with other children and adults (especially children in marginalised groups)**
  – **Knowing and sharing their rights and obligations**
  – **Encouraging the implementation and use of services deemed useful and capable of meeting their actual needs**
  – **Encouraging the harmonious development, protection and survival of all children**
  – **Fighting ostracisation, exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation**

- **Play a role in their community by:**
  – **Reinforcing their relationships with other children and adults**
  – **Reinforcing their sense of belonging in the community and in society**
  – **Reinforcing their understanding of democratic and citizen issues**
  – **Preparing them to exercise their civil, political, social and cultural rights**
  – **Developing a respect for the views of others (children and adults)**
  – **Reinforcing their participation as citizens and as agents of change (contrary to the protectionist approach that presents children as passive beneficiaries of services)**

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10. The concept does not only refer to the legal definition of citizenship (Canadian citizenship, for example) but also its social and political aspects. Based on a person's ability to act, as well as their knowledge and awareness of their rights and responsibilities, citizenship includes an active participation in society, while recognising the democratic values of solidarity, equality and freedom.

The participation of children enables <u>adults</u> to:

- Better understand and appreciate the best interests of children by:
  - Offering different perspectives as they reflect the experiences of children
  - Encouraging greater accountability of adults with respect to problems faced by children
  - Encouraging the inclusion of all children
  - Taking into account the evolving capacities of children
  - Reinforcing relationships between children and adults

- Implement relevant, effective and sustainable actions and strategies that are adapted to each child's specific context by:
  - Identifying services that meet the well-being and interests of children and that take into account their views
  - Integrating children's views in the assessment of their actions and strategies
  - Increasing the visibility and credibility of actions with respect to the issues surrounding children

- Reinforce civil society and participatory democracy by:
  - Facilitating the citizen participation of children
  - Contributing to the creation of a civil society

THE IBCR'S VALUES REGARDING CHILD PARTICIPATION

It goes without saying that the values that are inherent to the Bureau's general actions also apply to child participation. However, there are some particularities with respect to participation.

Respect

Respect means viewing children as legal persons, trusting them, believing that they can express and assert their views and needs, and understanding the information given to them when it takes into account their capacities. This implies that children have been correctly informed of their rights, that their voice is important and that they are taken seriously. Children also need to know the impact of their participation.

> " Children are people with their own opinions, voices, wishes and feelings, all of which must be taking into account.
>
> *(IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy, page 6)*

Adults who respect children treat them with dignity and equality. Adults should seek input from children for issues that directly affect them, strive to better understand their situation, highlight their real potential, offer opportunities for participation, and help guide them, without any abuse of power, in order for them to truly participate where their contribution is needed.

Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity means considering that all girls and boys are equal and have the same right to participate. For the IBCR, participation must be a means to foster greater equality among all children. It must not ignore or reinforce existing inequalities, even indirectly.

Much like general issues related to the right to equality, the participation of girls is a means to fight gender inequality. Gender equality is not respected when adults and children make decisions and choices based on personal characteristics, such as age, race, physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, etc. This leads to the unfair preference for a certain profile (for example, boys). In this respect, experience has shown that girls generally face more obstacles preventing them from participating because of gender-related stereotypes, thus depriving them of information and the ability to express their opinion or take part in decision-making. One of the pillars of the CRC being non-discrimination, it is essential to understand the impacts of gender equality and intersectoral discrimination on the participation of girls and boys, as well as to take into account these critical issues in our initiatives.

That being said, equality is closely linked to respecting the differences and diversity of all children. It calls to recognising the individuality and specific needs of each child through the implementation of accommodations that are sometimes designated as fairness measures.

> **OUR VALUES**
> - Respect
> - Equal opportunity
> - Honesty
> - Responsibility

Honesty

This value implies that adults act in a transparent manner as much as possible when information children need to exercise their right to participate. Being honest means continuous discussions about expectations, roles and responsibilities, and stakeholder power and obligations. It also implies that children are kept informed of the outcomes of their participation, project limitations, risks, and the real or potential advantages and benefits of the process.

Adults are responsible for properly communicating information that is relevant to the child, even if this information may disappoint her or him. With this in mind, avoid making promises if there is a chance that it may not come to fruition.

Responsibility

Responsibility means that adults are responsible for creating an adapted context that fosters child participation, so that children will not need to justify their ability to participate or the relevance of their participation. This value assumes that adults will anticipate risks and be responsible for putting mitigation measures in place to prevent ill-effects on the child's well-being because of the participation process or the results obtained.

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH AND INTERNATIONAL TEXTS

Our approach being essentially based on rights, our actions with respect to child participation are founded on the following main frame of reference:

- The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*[11] (specifically articles 12 and 13) and its three optional protocols
- *General Comment No. 12* of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW)
- *Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime*[12]

The IBCR considers it important for all mechanisms aimed at fostering child participation respect the principles of human rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Although the word "participation" does not explicitly appear in **Article 12** of the CRC, the article is the first to refer to it. The article underlines how the child is a legal person, by identifying the main components of participation. It assures that any child capable of discernment a) have "the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child" and that b) "the views of the child being given due weight (...) during proceedings affecting the child." The article specifies that the age and maturity of the child must be taken into account.

> **Article 12 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child***
>
> *"States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*
>
> *For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law."*

A child's participation must respect the principles of non-discrimination (Article 2), survival and development of the child (Article 6). It must consider the best interests of the child (Article 3), where the process aimed at determining what is in her or his best interests include information and hearing what the child has to say. Therefore, the best interests of a child cannot be properly considered unless the elements of Article 12 are respected, and vice versa.

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11. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, R.T. Cano 1992 no. 3 (entry into force 2 September 1990).
12. Refer to Appendix 2 for a brief overview of General Comment No. 12, the CEDAW and the *Guidelines*.

In addition to Article 12, the Convention includes many other articles that are closely linked to child participation and that provide for a better understanding of the actual scope and implications surrounding the right to participate.

These include:

- Article 5 (which addresses the evolving capacities of the child and the responsibility of adults in general and parents in particular to provide direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of his or her rights)

- Article 13 (freedom of expression)

- Article 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion)

- Article 15 (freedom of association)

- Article 16 (right to the protection of privacy)

- Article 17 (right to information)

- Article 19 (through the right to protection from all forms of violence, this also serves as a guideline in the application of the right to participate)

- Article 29 (right to education)

- Article 31 (right to rest and leisure and right to participate in cultural life and the arts).

For the IBCR, a broad interpretation of the right to participate encourages its effectiveness as well as that of the other rights of children. Without the participation of children, these other rights could not be fully respected.
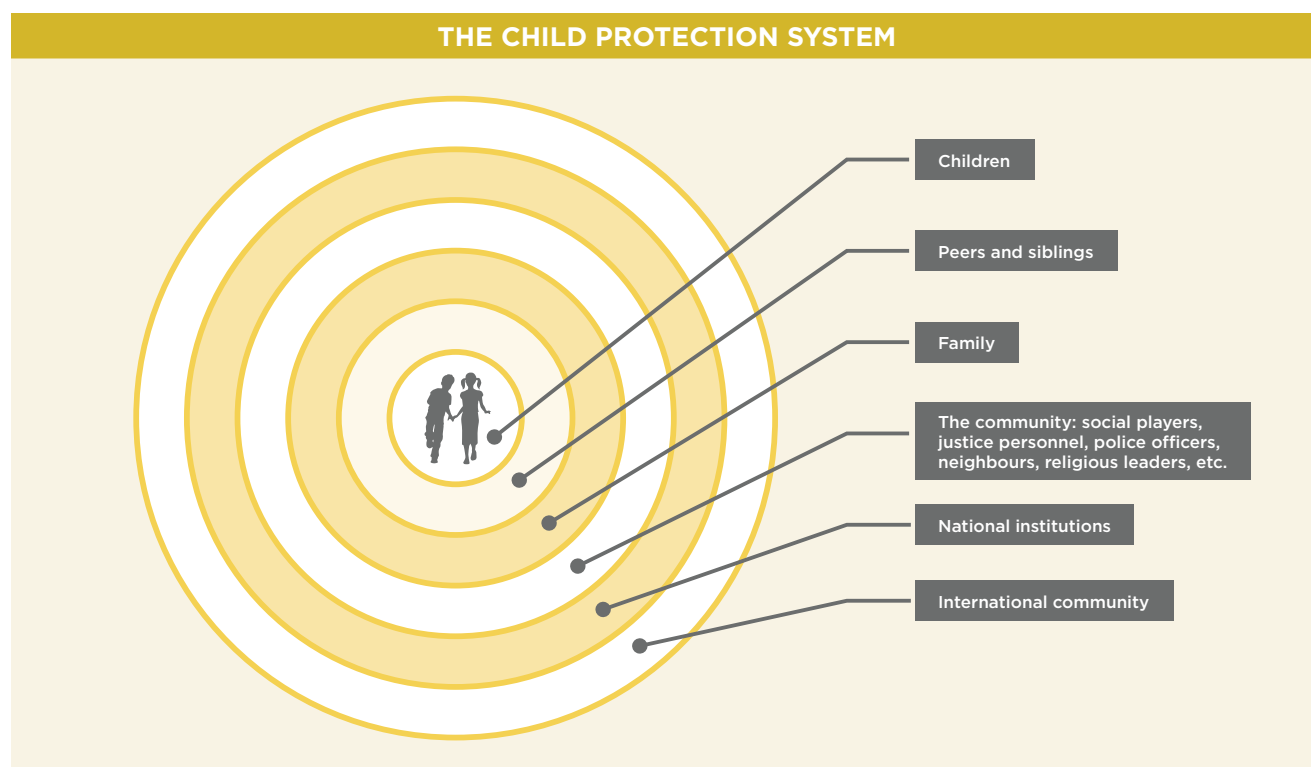
III. WHAT IS CHILD PARTICIPATION?

DEFINITION

There are many definitions of participation. Some have a broad scope and include all forms of social engagement, while others refer to a more targeted definition by mentioning the ability to participate in decision-making processes. Inspired by the various definitions, including those of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and World Vision[13], the IBCR has chosen a broader definition consistent with its overall conceptual model for participation, which takes into account the many ways that a child can participate depending on the context.

> **Child participation refers to continuous processes that are based on mutual respect, the right to explicit, adapted information, and dialogue between children as well as between children and adults.**

Therefore, for the IBCR, child participation refers to continuous processes that are based on mutual respect, the right to explicit, adapted information, and dialogue between children as well as between children and adults.

This definition is in line with the Bureau's child protection system model, which places children at the core of the system so that they may be involved in initiatives aimed at helping them achieve their full potential and independence. The definition also highlights the important influence that children have on each other, by including dialogue between children and between children and adults.

THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

- Children
- Peers and siblings
- Family
- The community: social players, justice personnel, police officers, neighbours, religious leaders, etc.
- National institutions
- International community

13. General Comment No. 12, page 4; Cuevas-Parra P., Stephano M. and Zhu Y., *Unpacking Gender Equality Approach to Children and Young Peoples's participation*, World Vision 2016.

According to this definition, child participation is not a one-time, isolated initiative. Instead, it is part of a process where a continuous dialogue between children and the adults in the protection system are needed with regard to decisions and actions that affect children. On a macroscopic level, the ultimate goal of the process and its related measures is to successfully create a culture where children actively participate, within their familial and social environment, as well as the protection system's institutions.

LINEAR AND CIRCULAR CONCEPTS OF PARTICIPATION

Literature about participation shows different child participation models.[14] Some models are based on a linear concept of participation, while others are based on a circular vision.

Linear concept

The linear concept of participation is generally illustrated as a ladder. Models based on this vision implicitly support the premise that the "best" forms of participation are shown on the highest rungs of the ladder. The most well-known and reproduced model is the one developed by Roger Hart in 1992.[15] This tool describes eight levels of participation that enable to measure a child's level of implication and participation. On the lowest rungs of the ladder, adults are requesting the participation of children based on their own needs, or based on the child's needs as identified by the adults. At the highest rungs of the ladder, it is children who initiate projects and request the help of adults as partners[16].

Like many authors and international development organisations, the IBCR considers that rungs 1, 2 and 3[17] are not participation as defined by the CRC and should be avoided.

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14. Including: Sherry Arnstein, *Ladder of Citizen participation* (1969); Roger Hart, *Ladder of Children Participation* (1992); Sarah White, *Typology of Participation* (1996); Phil Treseder, *Degree of Participation* (1997); Harry Shier, *Pathways to Participation* (2001); UNICEF, *Strategic Approach to Participation* (2001); Adam Fletcher, *Ladder of Volunteer Participation* (2003); Gerison Lansdown, *Model of Participation* (1995); Lundy L, *Model of Participation* (2007). See also *Participation Models – Citizens, Youth, Online, A chase through the maze*, July 2011, http://www.nonformality.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Participation-Models-20110703.pdf

15. Hart, Roger A., *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*, UNICEF: Florence (1992).

16. Some Hart model-based ladders associate the concept of child participation with initiatives where management is carried out jointly with adults (level 8), while for others, level 8 represents initiatives where children initiate and manage projects on their own.

17. Refer to Appendix 3 for a detailed presentation of the various levels of participation.

PARTICIPATION LEVELS – HART MODEL

In 1992 Roger Hart developed a model for "Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship" (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence):

Participation:

Rung 8: Shared decision making
Rung 7: Young people led and initiated
Rung 6: Adult initiated, shared decision making
Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed
Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Non participation:

Rung 3: Young people tokenised
Rung 2: Young people as decoration
Rung 1: Young people manipulated

Rung 8:
Shared decision making

Rung 7:
Led and initiated
by young people

Rung 6:
Adult-initiated,
Shared decision making

Rung 5:
Young people consulted
and informed

Rung 4:
Young people assigned
and informed

Rung 3:
Young people tokenised
(NON PARTICIPATION)

Rung 2:
Young people as decoration
(NON PARTICIPATION)

Rung 1:
Young people manipulated
(NON PARTICIPATION)
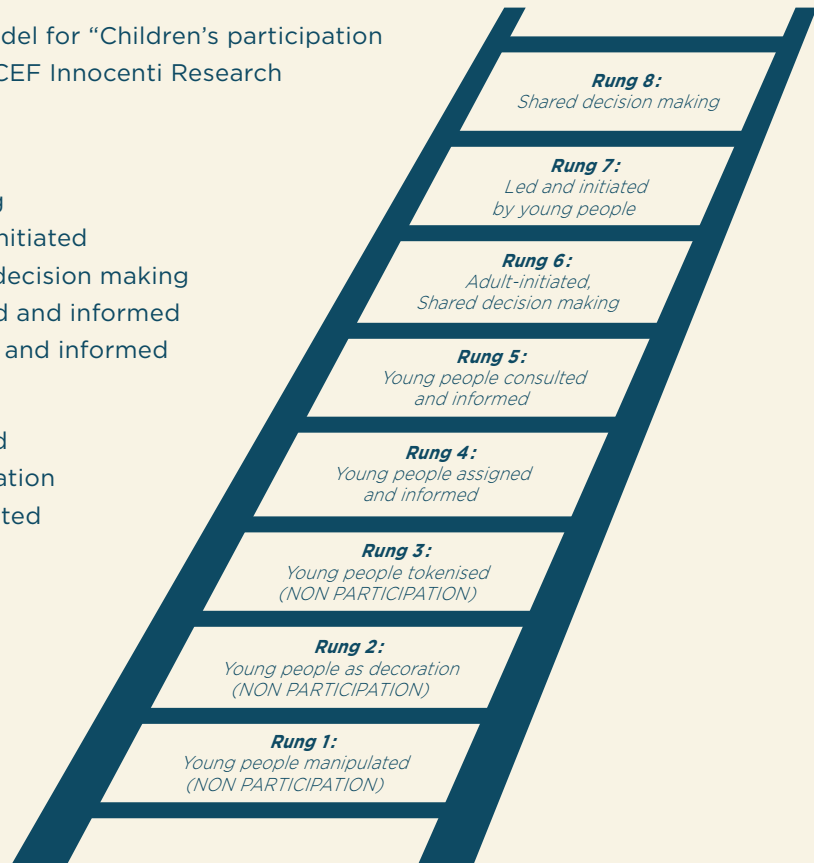
LEVELS	PARTICIPATION
8	Children initiate the project and manage it jointly with adults.
7	Children initiate and manage the project on their own.
6	Children are consulted (on a one-time basis or continuously) during decision-making, but actions are initiated by adults.
5	Children are informed and consulted.
4	Children are informed about the project and carry out tasks assigned to them.
	NON PARTICIPATION
3	Child participation is tokenised.
2	Children are used to bolster the organisation's image.
1	Children are manipulated.

The linear concept of participation is less coherent with the IBCR's institutional vision, which recognises that the context of child participation and the importance given to it are key. Thus, it is not necessary to systematically and blindly aim for the highest rungs of the ladder, but rather seek the level of participation that is appropriate given the context and circumstances, in line with the child's profile. This vision is more like the circular, non-hierarchical concept of participation.

Circular or non-hierarchical concept

The model developed by Phil Treseder[18] uses the five highest rungs of Hart's ladder, but using a circular logic rather than hierarchical levels. This is more closely in tune with the Bureau's vision. For Treseder, each level of participation can be appropriate, depending on the context, goals and activities that will form the framework of participation. Such a model seems better adapted to our practices and realities in the field. Different levels of participation can also be deemed appropriate according to the profile of the children involved, the project's context, circumstances, issues, and goals of the process. But beyond adherence to rigid, theoretical models, the choice of participation level must be guided by an inclusive respect of a child's fundamental right to empowerment (while seeing to her or his safety).

However, it is important to remember the relevance of aiming for the highest levels of participation, depending on the context, in order to maximise the positive impacts of a child's participation on a project's performance. Understanding the different levels of participation enable informed decision-making; it is also important to recognise that the lowest rungs of the ladder are to be avoided.

The Bureau is aware that a vast majority of its projects, including those carried out in emergency or development contexts, have until now included very little child participation in project management processes. Improving our practices to increase child participation must interfere with the need to remain realistic and to envision multiple opportunities for participation. Thus, if the conditions described later in this document are met, simple consultations could represent a promising opportunity to promote and apply children's rights to participation. It is therefore important to analyse a comprehensive array of criteria and to make an informed decision in order to identify which level of participation is best suited for each intervention and each child. The key message to keep in mind is that child participation must remain top-of-mind throughout the project management process.

NON HIERARCHICAL OR CIRCULAR CHILD PARTICIPATION MODEL

Full participation

Chiled-led initiative

Partnership

Adult-led initiative

Consultation

Voluntary

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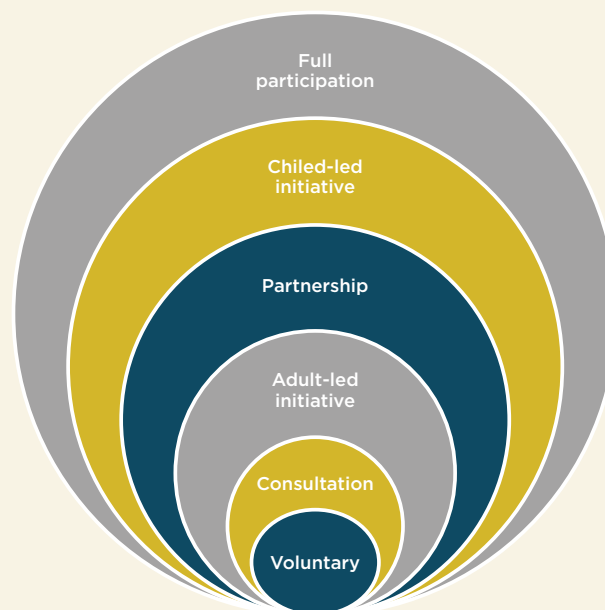
18. Treseder, Phil, *Empowering Children and Young People. Training Manual: Promoting involvement in decision making*, Children's Rights Office and Save the Children, London, 1997.

Some examples of initiatives according to different forms of child participation

Full participation

- **Children initiate and manage the project on their own.**

  A group of young high school students decide to advocate to the school's administration for measures to be taken to prevent sexual assaults by faculty on female students.

- **Child-led initiative: Children initiate the project and jointly manage it with adults.**

  A group of high school students decide to create a club within their school to increase knowledge and awareness of student rights and to implement an anonymous box where students can denounce abuse committed by faculty. The group seeks help from some adults to learn more about establishing a help line, developing a fundraising strategy and obtaining the administration's approval.

Partnership

- **The project is initiated by adults but both children and adults share the responsibilities to lead and manage it.**

  Adults and boys in a group home are members of a resident committee. They work together to implement an advocacy strategy in order to improve living conditions for the children. All actions and decisions taken are mutually agreed upon.

Consultation

- **Children are consulted (on a one-time basis or continuously) during decision-making, but actions are initiated by adults.**

  To create spaces in courthouses that are dedicated to children, some girls and boys are consulted to determine how these spaces should be organised and furnished. Children are also involved in choosing and assessing the equipment.

  Residents of a group home for young girls who are victims of forced marriages are informed that professional training courses will be offered at the centre. They are also consulted about the types of training to offer. The adults will then decide which training courses to develop.

Voluntary

- **Children are informed of the project and carry out tasks assigned to them.**

  A group of teenagers is consulted and trained to carry out a small investigation into the capital's main markets in order to list the accounts of boys and girls who work there. Data collected is then given to adults for their use.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Participatory processes generally fall within these three major categories:

- Consultative participation
- Collaborative participation
- Child-led participation[19]

These three types of processes may overlap. Furthermore, initiatives may evolve and pass from one category to another depending on the circumstances. For example, a project may begin with consultations with children and then progressively include actions where children are given increased responsibilities and have a greater influence on decision-making. It is also possible to simultaneously carry out activities in one or another category, depending on the project's specificities.

FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Consultation

Collaboration

Self-promotion and advocacy
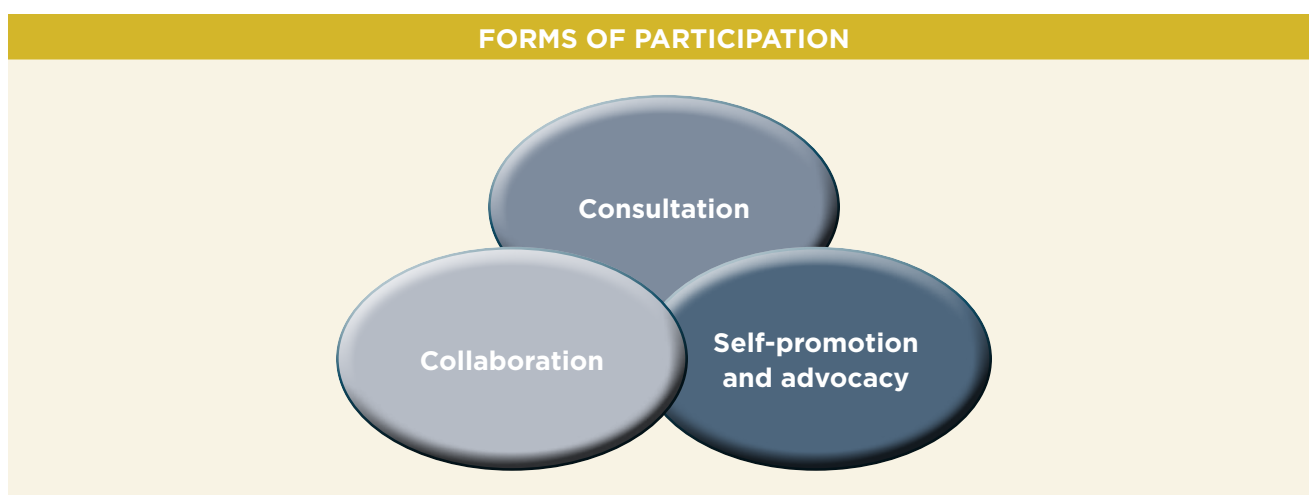
Consultative participation

In this type of process, girls and boys are asked to talk about their experience and to share their opinions and concerns with adults or other children. Children are listened to, but they do not participate in the development, planning or management of the project. They also have no role to play in the methodology, analysis of data collected and results. The project is led and managed only by adults, who remain entirely responsible for decision-making. For that matter, the decisions must reflect the concerns expressed by the children.

Consultative participation is used for small projects and large-scale programmes too. For the former, children express their views on a one-time basis and for a specific issue. For longer term initiatives, consultation takes place on a continuous basis, enabling children to have a greater influence on decisions made and project outcomes.

19. *A toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation – How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation – Booklet 3*, Save the Children, 2014, page 4.

The transformational potential (of adult/child relationships) in this type of consultation is relatively low for the children involved. However, this does not invalidate the consultative process that could be best-suited for a certain situation or context, specifically when it is not possible for adults to delegate their responsibilities to children. For example, it would not be appropriate for children to lead capacity reinforcement workshops aimed at adults.

Examples of non participation

- **Child participation is tokenised**

  Children are asked to participate in a workshop for research they will take part in but for which they have no actual role to play. They have not been informed of the outcomes of the research or of what happens next.

- **Children are used to bolster the organisation's image**

  Children living on the street are chosen at random to be in a group photo at the end of a training course about interventions with street children. The photo will be on the cover page of the report, which will be shared with the project's partners.

- **Children are manipulated**

  An organisation establishes a partnership with a youth association in order to obtain funding for projects aimed at teenagers. The organisation exaggerates the roles and responsibilities that will be given to the association in order to secure their cooperation and obtain funding.

Consultations with children carried out by the IBCR as part of the study entitled *Paroles de jeunes et participation au processus de justice: trajectoires judiciaires de victimes et de témoins d'actes criminels au Québec*[20], the drafting of situation and protection system analyses, and the development of training toolkits, fall in this category.[21]

Collaborative participation

Collaborative participation encourages greater participation by children once the initiative has been initiated by adults. Partnerships are established based on closer collaboration and active, recurring child participation. Some collaborative participation processes may also progressively be implemented following successful consultations or as children and adults learn to know each other better, thus transforming the partnership to develop new ways of working together.[22]

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20. The study is available on the IBCR's shared server – S:\2015 SHARING\COMMUNICATIONS\Publications\Publications IBCR\Canada – as well as on its website – http://www.ibcr.org/publications/.

21. For more examples of this process, refer to the document prepared by G. Lansdown, *Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision-Making*, UNICEF Innocenti Insight, 2001, pages 18 to 20. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf

22. As with consultative participation, this type of participation can be used for small projects or large-scale programmes. For example, with collaborative participation, children can be asked to contribute to the development of a data gathering methodology, the analysis of the results, or discussions about the development of new programmes. They can also be involved in implementing activities at various levels. This participation category increases the capacity of influence held by children in decision-making, without radically changing power rapports with adults, who remain solely responsible for strategic decisions. For examples of this, refer to the previously mentioned G. Landsdown document, pages 21 to 26.

This category includes the IBCR's projects that combine the development of visual and audiovisual training tools with active child participation, with children either as subjects or actors in various supports. The participation of children in awareness activities about sexual exploitation in the tourism industry in Costa Rica is a good example of this type of participation.[23]

Child-led participation

This type of participation puts children at the core of the initiatives. They identify the issues and needs, the solutions to these problems and the implementation of solutions. They define the issues related to their situation and decide on the strategies that, in their opinion, are the most suited to resolve these issues. Adults are no longer tasked with leading the project, but rather to guide and advise the children in charge of the process.[24]

These types of processes may seem less adapted to the IBCR when one thinks of the very nature of the organisation (centre of expertise that does not offer services directly to children). That being said, the consultation and advocacy process led by children in the Middle-East and Northern Africa as part of the civil society reinforcement project for children's rights falls in this category. While the project was not initiated by children, they were very involved in the implementation of activities and strategic decision-making throughout the project[25].

At this stage, it is important to remember that the point is not to judge the theoretical value of the different forms of participation. Rather, it is to better understand them in order to determine their purpose, define their conditions and applications in projects, and decide which is the best suited to the profile of the children involved and the circumstances of the project.

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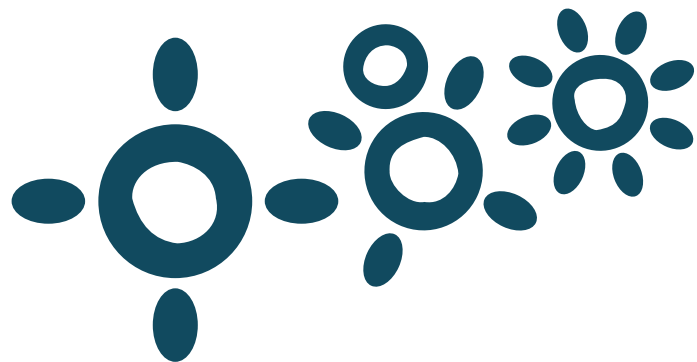
23. S:\2015 SHARING\COMMUNICATIONS\Publications\Publications IBCR\Costa Rica\Paniamor 2012-2014; http://www.ibcr.org/publications/

24. In this type of process, adults may be asked to help with administrative tasks, funding or establishing communications between the children and the authorities. The adults accept to relinquish their power to the children, helping to establish power rapports where children can exercise their own powers to act. For examples of this, refer to the previously mentioned G. Lansdown document, pages 26 to 29.

25. See the table in Appendix 1 for more information on this project, as well as the guide prepared at the end of this project's component entitled "*Child led Data Collection – A guide for young people to learn how to do research and create positive change*", Save the Children, Sweden, https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/5901/pdf/5901.pdf

IV. A RIGOROUS YET FLEXIBLE METHODOLOGY

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on institutional values and adhering to guiding principles, the applicable methodology for child participation throughout the management cycle of projects and programmes implemented by the IBCR is both rigorous and flexible. It is rigorous because it respects applicable quality standards and it is flexible because it proposes to make choices according to the context in which the Bureau is intervening.

> For IBCR teams, child participation is a constant concern throughout the duration of the project management process!

Our teams must always focus on integrating child participation throughout a project's phases. Based on an exhaustive brainstorming and analysis of the project implementation context, the methodology framework proposed in this document aims to help teams better identify child participation opportunities and implications in project management. The methodology is not a turnkey, one-size-fits-all solution. It aims at encouraging and informing discussions prior to making decisions about child participation, during the implementation of participation processes and follow-up activities, and for the assessment of these processes.

SIX GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles reinforce the values identified by helping to articulate their content more concretely. They also serve to guide the participation process' applicable methodology, no matter what the level of child participation.

PRINCIPLE NO. 1: PARTICIPATION IS RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL TO CHILDREN

A child's contribution to decisions that affect her or him is not only legitimate, but is also required for various more relevant, better adapted, more efficient and meaningful initiatives. When children's views and experiences are ignored, initiatives are poorly adapted or irrelevant, and wrong decisions can be taken, risking the safety of children or adversely affecting them.

THE SIX GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CHILD PARTICIPATION

1) Participation is <u>relevant</u> and <u>meaningful</u> to children.
2) Participation is <u>voluntary</u> and <u>informed</u>.
3) Participation will do <u>no harm to the child</u>.
4) Participation is <u>inclusive</u> of and <u>accessible</u> to all children.
5) Participation processes are managed by <u>trained, competent personnel</u>.
6) Participation processes are implemented and <u>assessed</u> rigorously and professionnally.

Both girls and boys have a lot of things to say. They are in the best position to state what is important to them, using their own vocabulary and according to their own abilities. In addition, children are often the best suited to influence actions to be taken in order to improve their conditions on the short-term and their situation in the long-term.

With this in mind, to be relevant and meaningful, the participation of children must first take into account their actual capacities, personal experience and situational context (family, social, educational, etc.). It is therefore important that the area targeted by the initiative and participation process be of interest to the child, and that the outcomes of the project and the process have a meaningful and positive influence on the child's life.

The sooner children are involved, the more meaningful their participation will be. Greater participation at the preliminary stages of a project (development and planning) will have more of an impact on the implementation and outcomes of a project. Consequently, the possibility of involving children before activities are carried out should not be systematically excluded, when circumstances permit, even if this could be difficult in practice. This is particularly the case of emergency or humanitarian crisis situations, where infrastructures are usually nonexistent or non-functional. The fact that the Bureau does not offer services directly to children also needs to be taken into account, much like wait times inherent to the approval of projects that would separate a child's initial participation during the development of a project form the implementation of activities. Such a situation would quite probably instill certain hopes in the children, which would cause more harm than good.

This first principle also assumes that children are adequately equipped to fully carry out their role. For this, capacity reinforcement activities have to be planned for the girls and boys involved with respect to their rights to participate.

PRINCIPLE NO. 2: PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY AND INFORMED

Participation is a right, not a privilege. Therefore, the question is not whether the child should participate or not, but rather when and how she or he will participate. All decisions regarding participation must take into account a child's best interests. Consequently, our obligations toward the right to participation are to encourage participation, create opportunities, and provide an adapted environment that is propitious to the child exercising his or her right to participate. A harmful, menacing, intimidating environment, or one that is ill-adapted to the child's evolving capacities, will bias the voluntary aspect of her or his actions and choices.

However, a child should not be obligated to participate. The right to participate implies that it is done by choice, therefore refusing to participate, or withdrawing from the process, need not be justified. It is important to obtain valid consent (voluntary and informed) from the child and/or her or his parents and guardians before beginning any initiative that involves her or his participation. Such consent is given independently, without pressure or manipulation, after the child has obtained all relevant information to inform her or his decision. In addition, consent can be revoked at any time by the child, without the need for justification.

According to the *IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy* (hereinafter the *"Safeguarding Policy"* or *"the Policy"*):

> *"Children's photos and images may only be included in publications if an informed consent is provided in writing from the child and her/his parents or guardians. An informed consent implies that the individual understands the circumstances in which the image will be used and all potential consequences of its publication, distribution and circulation."[26]*

The *Policy* also proposes various consent forms for children and their parents/guardians.[27]

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26. *IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy*, page 11.

27. Ibid, in appendices 5-6-7-8, pages 30 to 37.

PRINCIPLE NO. 3: PARTICIPATION WILL DO NO HARM TO THE CHILD

In all cases, the IBCR will ensure that the child's participation will not cause her or him any harm nor expose her or him to risks, in accordance with its *Child Safeguarding Policy* and the measures indicated in it. Behind this principle, all information (including images) that could violate the child's dignity and/or safety must remain confidential. For example, the *Safeguarding Policy* indicates that:

> *"The IBCR ensures that the use of children's information and photos is limited and controlled in our publications."*

> *"No photo or image of a recognisable child may be used in an IBCR publication to illustrate violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect committed against a child. This rule applies despite having the consent of the child appearing in the photo or the child's legal guardian or the agency that owns the photo."*[28]

It is therefore essential that an assessment be carried out first, in order to a) measure risk factors; b) develop a risk mitigation strategy; and c) implement the required safeguards to prevent and avoid risk, while protecting the child against any harm stemming from her or his participation. Any reasonable doubt about her or his well-being and safety requires to rethink and redefine the participation process' conditions and safeguarding measures. Special attention shall be given to processes that involve the participation of children who've already suffered or are at a risk of violence, abuse, negligence or exploitation. These children cannot be allowed to be victimised once again. It is also important to keep in mind that the possible consequences of the participation process on a child may differ between girls and boys. Thus, it is essential that the analysis and resulting measures take into account the different risks faced by girls and boys.

Nonetheless, the fact that a child's safety is paramount to the participation process does not mean one should adopt an overprotective approach, which would be detrimental to the empowered approach. This means that is important not to discard different opportunities for children to express themselves and develop their independence under the pretext of keeping them safe. Indeed, it would go against this principle if the vulnerable situation a child is in served as a systematic reason for overprotective decisions, which would ultimately deny the child her or his independence and reinforce her or his dependence on adults.

PRINCIPLE NO. 4: PARTICIPATION IS INCLUSIVE OF AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CHILDREN

Children do not form a homogenous group and do not have equal access to participation spaces. Many are marginalised and face additional obstacles that prevent them from being heard, especially with regard to their gender, an impairment, their situation (children living on the street, for example), etc. Girls are particularly at risk of not being properly heard. They are often discriminated against because of their age or gender, and ill-adapted conditions may further expose them to risks.

Yet, the right to participate must be inclusive of all children. This is why it is important to put in place equity measures and accommodations so that children that may otherwise be discriminated against have a real chance to be heard and to participate in initiatives that affect them. At the same time, measures aimed at fighting sexism and discrimination, which hinder a child's full participation, must be planned for.

28. Ibid, page 11.

PRINCIPLE NO. 5: PARTICIPATION PROCESSES ARE MANAGED BY TRAINED, COMPETENT PERSONNEL.

A participation process that meets the quality standards set by the Bureau must be properly planned for. It is thus essential for personnel to always stay-up-to-date on how to apply child participation rights throughout the IBCR's programmes. Our personnel and partners need to acquire the knowledge and know-how needed to foster an adapted environment that is propitious to meaningful, inclusive participation that meets established standards.

Should our personnel not possess the required skills to do so, teams must reach out to external experts when needed in order to ensure that the participation process is of optimal quality.

PRINCIPLE NO. 6: PARTICIPATION PROCESSES ARE IMPLEMENTED AND ASSESSED RIGOROUSLY AND PROFESSIONALLY.

In order to respect the values and principles of child participation, IBCR personnel adopts a rigorous, yet flexible methodology[29], which encourages the use of practices that take into account children's rights and that are adapted to context at hand. This methodology includes useful, simple and reliable tools that help identify the best conditions for child participation, depending on the initiative or the project, and assess the quality of children's participation and the actual impact it has on the project outcome.

The assessment process involves feedback from the children about the participation process, next steps and decisions taken. Feedback is also useful to inform children of lessons learned from their participation, which will ultimately help improve methods. This component is very important to ensure the process' metrological consistency[30] and ethics.

THE METHODOLOGY – A SEVEN-COMPONENT PROCESS

The institutional methodology proposed in these *Guidelines* is based on actual situations faced by the Bureau, using as a starting point the kick-off of activities. This methodology may evolve toward earlier participation practices within the cycle of a project, as new experiences and learnings are acquired.

The main components of the proposed methodology have been identified using various documents about child participation. These documents have been prepared by international development organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children. Even though it is a framework, it does not preclude the development of a project-specific methodology adapted to certain goals, as long as the guiding principles and children's rights are respected.

The methodology thus includes seven major components that are based on children's rights and the guiding principles surrounding child participation. It is important to note that several steps/components overlap throughout the participation process; it is a flexible methodology. Child participation can be assessed, depending on the context, for each component.

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29. The methodology is described in detail in the following section.

30. "Metrology is mainly concerned with establishing the units of measurements, (...) developing methods of measurement, analysing the accuracy of methods of, (...) researching into the causes of measuring errors." Definition found on the What-When-How website at http://what-when-how.com/metrology/what-is-metrology/ (visited on April 3, 2018).

THE METHODOLOGY – A SEVEN-COMPONENT PROCESS	
Component no. 1	Assess the opportunity to include child participation in the project's cycle.
Component no. 2	Analyse risks and potential harm caused by the child's participation.
Component no. 3	Choose the forms and levels of participation.
Component no. 4	Develop a risk mitigation and maximum participation strategy.
Component no. 5	Select participating children.
Component no. 6	Implement the participation process.
Component no. 7	Follow up on the participation process and assess learnings.

COMPONENT NO. 1
Assess the opportunity to include child participation in the project's cycle

If it has not already been done at the project's development and planning phase, the team must first analyse the project's context, goals and proposed actions in order to decide when and why it would be relevant for children to participate, always keeping in mind the aforementioned values and guiding principles. Because non-participation is not an option, the preliminary analysis aims to define the "when" and "how" of child participation throughout the project's cycle.

During strategic discussions had at this phase, it is important to establish links between the project's objectives and those of child participation. This will enable to identify which activities are most apt to have a positive influence on the children and on the project's outcomes.

For example, is participation needed to obtain more concrete information in order to offer services to children? Is the process aimed at obtaining children's opinions on the fields of intervention that should be prioritised during the project? Is child participation needed to determine the contents of a training course or a child safeguarding policy? Is the purpose to reinforce the capacities of a group of children so that they may better defend their rights and decisions?

> Opportunities and reasons to include child participation in the project's cycle.

For example, if the project aims at improving support services for children, it may be beneficial to include the participation of children who have already benefitted from these services for data collection, in order to know about their experience, their views, positive and negative aspects, ways to improve the services, etc. If the situation permits, children could also be asked to participate in the drafting of recommendations or in validating service improvement recommendations, to ensure that their concerns have been addressed.

The following questions can help teams identify opportunities where child participation can be included in the project[31].

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 1
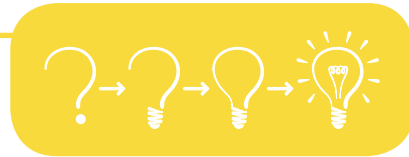
– *What are the project objectives?*
– *Are the objectives aimed at the short-term improvement of a group of children's situation? The long-term improvement?*
– *Are children directly or indirectly affected by the project's objectives?*
– *If children are indirectly affected, which group will be directly affected? What is its link to the children?*
– *In which context or situation do these groups interact with children?*
– *What are the objectives and the expected outcomes of the participation process?[32]*
– *How will child participation help meet the project's objectives and outcomes? What is its added value?*
– *What type of data or information (qualitative, quantitative) is required from the children? (e.g. get feedback about a certain subject, hear about children's experiences with violence, understand the needs and expectations of children with respect to a specific service, etc.)*
– *Which approach would be best-suited for the project's objectives? One-time participation or continuous participation (for a long-term initiative)?*
– *At which phase of the project would it be useful for children to participate?*
– *At which phase of the project would it be safest for children to participate?*
– *During which activities is child participation needed?*
– *During which activities would child participation be the most useful (but not critical)?*
– *What is sought by having boys and girls participate? (e.g. capacity reinforcement, improvement of self-esteem, empowerment, capacity for self-protection, etc.)*
– *What do the participation activities offer to boys? To girls? How are the issues involved important for them?*
– *How will their participation be relevant to them?*
– *How will their participation be meaningful to them?*
– *Will their participation have a positive impact on their current living conditions and/or their overall situation (family, social, etc.)?*
– *Which project components or activities would most lead to a meaningful participation for children?*

COMPONENT NO. 2
Analyse risks and potential harm caused by the child's participation

This component is without a doubt one of the most important, because it is essential to protect the physical and mental safety of the children involved. The team must ensure that at no time will the child's participation put her or him at risk, whether physically, psychologically or socially.

It is therefore necessary to analyse short-, medium- and long-term risks and potential harm for the child, and not for the project's outcomes. This analysis and related measures must take into account the different risks faced by girls and boys.

The risk analysis is carried out at the beginning of the project, during preliminary decision-making. It is then updated before activities involving children begin, and it is assessed through the participation process. Risk analysis must also consider those risks that a child may be exposed to after his or her participation. For this, it is important to have proper knowledge and consideration of local and national geographical, political, social, cultural and religious contexts. Risk analysis also requires that the risks of non-participation also be assessed.
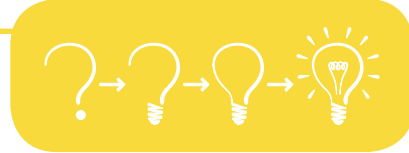
A good analysis must produce a reliable diagnosis, especially with respect to the participation process' specific context, as well as the local and national context. It must also focus on the child (or group of children) and what is particular about her or him from individual, family and social standpoints. The process will result in the development and implementation strategy to mitigate identified risks and increase child participation opportunities.

In addition, some situations may at first seem less propitious to child participation. This is especially the case during humanitarian crises. While keeping in mind the specific risks posed by certain contexts, the IBCR believes that emergency situations should not preclude the possibility of child participation. That being said, additional efforts are needed to identify effective reactive mitigation measures that are adapted to the specificities of the context. Foregoing child

> **A comprehensive assessment of risks related to participation and non-participation.**

participation is only acceptable if all participation opportunities have been excluded due to the "do no harm" principle and the best interests of the child. This would be the case if the risk analysis showed that the probability of harm to the child would exceed the benefits that she or he would gain from participating.

The following questions can help teams carry out risk analyses of child participation[33].

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 2

- **Environmental and physical safety diagnosis**
  - *Will the child be exposed to an environmental hazard or natural disaster? Specify.*
  - *Are there any risks for the child's physical well-being (e.g. risk of injury, infection, fatigue, etc.)? Specify.*
  - *Will the child's participation cause a negative reaction from his parents or legal guardians?*
  - *Does the child have any special physical needs?*
  - *Does the context of participation create an inadequate promiscuity or contacts that could be harmful to the child's physical well-being?*
  - *Are there any risks of reprisals against the child (or his or her family) because of his or her participation (teaching personnel, religious leaders, political leaders, other children, etc.)?*
  - *Are there any risks of abuse or exploitation from personnel involved in the participation process?*
  - *Have all the persons involved signed and acknowledged the Code of Ethics?*
  - *Are there risks of stigmatisation if the child participates?*
  - *Are there risks that the child will once again be victimised?*
  - *Does the proposed methodology ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the child?*

- **Psychosocial diagnosis**
  - *What is the child's psychological state?*
  - *Does the child have any special psychological needs?*
  - *Is the theory discussed during the participation process appropriate or adapted to the child's evolving capacities and developmental stage? (e.g. sexuality, explicit/implicit violence, emotions, personal experience with violence, drugs, etc.)*
  - *Will the child be at risk of being exposed to potentially harmful or intrusive situations?*
  - *Has the child provided valid consent? What is his or her motivation?*
  - *Does the context of participation create an inadequate promiscuity or contacts that could be harmful to the child's mental well-being?*
  - *Are the participation activities child friendly and mindful of the child's needs and specificities?*

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33. Also refer to the table in Appendix 6.

- **Diagnosis of available resources and support**
    - *Are there enough competent human resources to properly implement the participation process?*
    - *Who is responsible for child safeguarding issues within the organisation? For this project?*
    - *Are there enough competent human resources to quickly intervene should an incident or emergency occur?[34]*
    - *Are there enough material resources available to properly implement the process? (e.g. transportation, accommodations, meals, etc.)*
    - *Are there enough human and material resources to supervise, follow up and assess the process?*
    - *Are there tools (safeguards) to inform the child and obtain proper consent? (e.g. consent form, informative pamphlet on children's rights, complaint procedure, etc.)*

COMPONENT NO. 3
Choose the forms and levels of participation

Once a decision has been made about participation opportunities soon after the start of the project, the team must discuss the most appropriate forms and levels of participation, while taking into account the results of the risk analysis, the context, circumstances, available resources, schedules, expected outcomes and the profile sought for child participants.

The different models of participation presented earlier in the document (consultative, collaborative and child-led) will help teams determine which approaches are possible and more clearly define which ones are the most relevant for the project. Possible alternative forms of participation must also be considered according to the results of the risk analysis.
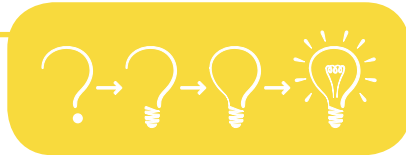
> Relevant and meaningful forms of child participation.

It is important to remember that the objective is not necessarily to aim for the top of the participation ladder, but rather for the optimal participation level according to the circumstances.

For example, in a project where capacity reinforcement tools (operating procedures, training toolkits, etc.) must be developed for one or several areas of the child protection system, the team may decide, after an analysis, to request child participation during various consultation phases (e.g. development or validation) by creating spaces that would be reserved for only them. Another form of participation would be to invite youth organisations to help organise promotional events, or to ask child actors to participate in the production of audiovisual training materials (as is currently the case in Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

The last five columns of the table presented in Appendix 5 show various forms of participation that can be considered for project activities. Along with the following questions, it can help teams identify potential levels of participation depending on which options have been retained during the first component.

34. Refer to Appendix 2 on page 24 of the Child Safeguarding Policy for the "Child Safeguarding Incident Report."

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 3

- *Is additional research or an external resource necessary to define which levels of participation are possible or which should be considered in light of the circumstances?*
- *What are the comparative advantages and disadvantages between the different possible forms of child participation? And for the project?*
- *Which forms of participation are possible following the results of the risk analysis, the context, project circumstances, and the child profiles sought? For example, do participation levels take into account the child's age, evolving capacities and specific situations?*
- *Which forms of participation are the most likely to help reach objectives for the child?*
- *Which forms of participation are the most likely to help reach project objectives?*
- *What is the expected duration of child participation? Is it a one-time participation or a continuous participation?*
- *Which support is available and which support needs to be implemented (including availability of information for children) to fully encourage this form of participation?*
- *Which additional supports should be implemented to fully encourage the participation of girls or marginalised children?[35]*
- *What needs to be implemented according to the chosen forms of participation?*
- *Which tools and resources are needed and which are available for the chosen forms of participation?*

COMPONENT NO. 4
Develop a risk mitigation and maximum participation strategy

The risk analysis leads to the development of a mitigation strategy for identified risks. It defines concrete measures and mechanisms to be implemented in order to prevent negative physical, psychological and social consequences for the child. This strategy especially takes into account gender-related specificities so that it is effective for both girls and boys. Considering its goal and the safety issues related to its efficiency, the strategy must be realistic and enough resources must be available to implement it. It must also consider work with families and communities to reduce risks as much as possible.

> A gender-specific strategy to minimise risks associated with child participation.

In general, the following mitigation measures are recommended:

- Inform children and their parents about their rights to safety and dignity during the participation process, the support resources available if needed, and the recourses possible should these rights be violated
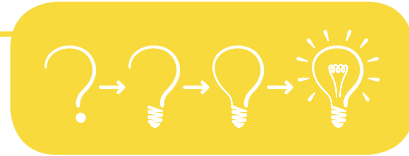
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35. Refer to the Plan Canada document, *Guidelines for consulting children with disabilities*, Plan International.

- Hire or identify a person whose been properly trained to supervise and coordinate the participation process

- Adequately train personnel involved in the participation process so that they may:
  - Select the children who will be participating in the project
  - Listen to children and gather their accounts without influencing them
  - Effectively communicating with children according to their developmental level
  - Communicate necessary information to children – the information must be understandable, correct, clear and reliable
  - Adapt support strategies to each child based on a proper assessment of their actual ability to understand the information being given to them and to give their opinion
  - Create an environment that encourages inclusive participation from girls and boys, while taking into account gender-specific issues and intersectoral discrimination
  - Schedule consultative meetings with children
  - Create an environment that reinforces children's capacities and fosters their independence
  - Develop tools and use adapted participation techniques (e.g. questionnaires, semi-directed interviews, focus groups, etc.)
  - Define relevant indicators to assess the participation and its impact on project outcomes
  - Properly analyse children's accounts and behaviours
  - Properly support children by taking into account their needs, strengths and uniqueness

- Define and implement reactive, efficient safeguarding measures should a child's safety or dignity be compromised, including children who are marginalised within the group

- Define and implement support measures for children involved in the participation process

- Ensure personnel adhere to institutional policies and practices regarding child safeguarding and that they respect established standards

- Obtain explicit consent from children and their parents (or legal guardians) for the participation process (ideally, in writing using a consent form)[36]

- Obtain explicit consent from children and their parents (or legal guardians) to take and use photos, videos and other visual representations of participating children, even if at first this may seem to go against their best interests

- Obtain explicit consent from children and their parents (or legal guardians) to use the information obtained from the participation process

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders, including children

36. See appendices 5-6-7-8, pages 30 to 37, of the *IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy* for examples of consent forms.

The following questions can help teams prepare a risk mitigation strategy.

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 4

– *Taking into account issues surrounding the children's physical safety, which safeguards need to be put in place to mitigate child participation risk factors and possible negative consequences?*
– *Taking into account issues linked to the children's psychological well-being, which safeguards need to be put in place to mitigate child participation risk factors and possible negative consequences?*
– *Taking into account issues surrounding the children's family and social well-being, which safeguards need to be put in place to mitigate child participation risk factors and possible negative consequences?*
– *Which resources (human, material, etc.) are needed to implement risk mitigation measures? Are they available?*
– *Which measures will be taken to implement a child-friendly environment?*
– *Which measures will be taken to protect children's personal information and privacy?*
– *How will child protection issues be taken into account when hiring personnel for the participation process?*
– *What are the training needs for personnel involved in the participation process?*
– *What are the training needs for children involved in the participation process?*
– *What needs to be implemented to support children and meet their needs and concerns before, during and after the process?*
– *What type of monitoring and/or support are needed for the children's families or communities at the end of the participation process?*
– *Are the IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy standards known and understood by personnel and children involved in the participation process?*
– *How will children be informed of their rights and recourses during the participation process?*
– *Are there proper tools and forms to obtain informed consent from children (and their parents)?*
– *Are the roles and responsibilities of all project stakeholders defined and understood by the personnel involved? By the children?*
– *Have the project stakeholders, including the children, approved the risk mitigation strategy and its related measures?*

COMPONENT NO. 5
Select participating children

The child selection process is generally not easy, so it is important to have clear participation objectives and limits to help guide the process. Selecting children to interview their peers is very different from choosing children to participate in consultative focus groups. That being said, some limits should be mentioned.

As a general rule, child selection should never reinforce existing discrimination or exclusion models within the community (for example, children from well-off families capable of expressing themselves or considered gifted by their peers or adults). Because children cannot form a uniform group, the selection process must leverage their diversity and seek to include equal participation from boys and girls from marginalised groups or those normally excluded from participation initiatives. Here are some criteria to take into consideration:

- Age group
- Gender
- Environment (rural vs. urban)
- Social class
- Ethnicity
- Handicap
- Education
- Religious group
- Racial group
- Sexual orientation
- Etc.

> **An inclusive and rigorous selection process.**

Having a wider vision of child participation prevents from limiting oneself to a child's specific situation to focus instead on the specific abilities of each child and her or his ability to speak about issues that affect all children. For example, a handicapped child could be asked to help determine applicable rules in a schoolyard. Above and beyond the child's "problem," what is important is that selected children have a reason to participate in the project and the process. They should have experienced in some way the situations or issues or have an interest in the situations. Otherwise, the process will not be relevant.

Due to constraints generally imposed by the context and the available resources with respect to the number of children who can participate, selection criteria should ensure that the selected children can properly represent the targeted group, while taking into account that personal experience will differentiate each child's accounts. A good practice is to implement a transparent process and to ask children to name someone to best represent them. Other useful partners include community members, youth associations or civil society organisations who work with children – they can all help in the child selection process. That being said, a sample will always be just that, and even the best selection cannot guarantee the absolute representation of all children. In all cases, keep in mind that selected children will not necessarily speak for all children.

The method and tools used in the child selection process will have an impact on its outcomes. They must therefore be developed and chosen by competent persons who fully understand the scope and issues of the participation process. A more formal selection process could, for example, include a document with detailed descriptions of the activities and tasks to be carried out, semi-directed interviews and a final selection made by a panel of at least two persons. A less formal approach could include all children having expressed an interest in participating, subject to safety considerations and available resources. Finally, another method could involve children in the selection process, in order to identify representatives for different groups of children.

The selection method chosen must involve communicating to children a maximum amount of relevant information about the participation process. This information must be clear and understandable for children, enabling them to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate. It is generally recommended to have face-to-face meetings with the children and their parents (or tutors), rather than distributing written documents.
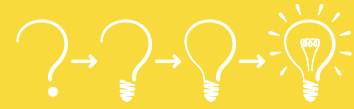
The following information should be shared with the children and their parents (or tutors):

- Objectives of the participation process
- General context and framework of participation activities
- Roles, responsibilities and tasks of the children
- Roles, responsibilities and tasks of the adults (including informing children)
- Use and leveraging of their participation
- Activity schedule
- Child selection criteria
- Expected number of children
- Required training that will be given to the children
- Rights of the children, including the right to withdraw from the process at any time and without justification
- Safeguards and other support
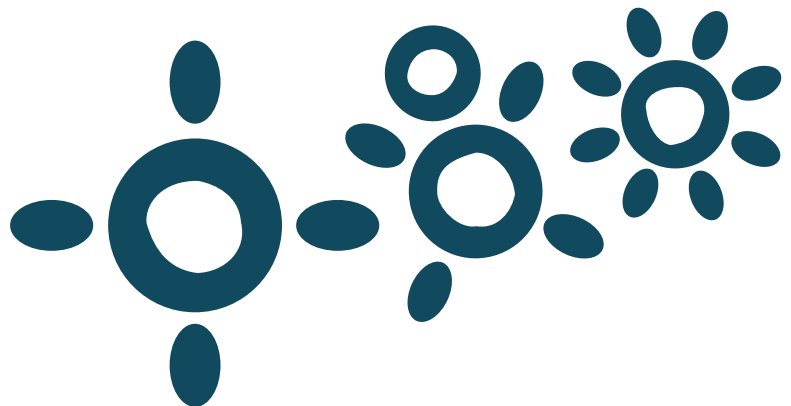- Compensation (or lack of)
- Limits of the participation process

It is important to always keep in mind that asking children to participate is not a privilege offered by adults, it is a child's fundamental right. Participation should therefore never be subject to punishment or rewards.

The following questions can help teams implement the selection process.

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 5

– *Who is involved and responsible for selecting child participants?*
– *Who are the civil society organisation and/or community representatives who will help select child participants?*
– *What are the needs of those involved in and responsible for selecting child participants?*
– *How many children are needed?*
– *Are specific profiles sought after, taking into account the context and objectives of the participation process? The project? If the answer is "yes," what are the profiles sought? Why?*
– *Should some child profiles be excluded given the context and circumstances of the participation process? If the answer is "yes," which ones? Why?*
– *Will the children involved have enough time to participate without too much interference with their schedule (learning, professional, recreational activities)?*
– *In addition to safety measures, which measures will be implemented to guarantee the selection takes into account the diversity of children and integrates those who are normally excluded from participation initiatives?*
– *Which measures will be implemented to encourage equal participation by girls and boys?*
– *What resources are available for the selection of child participants? Are they sufficient?*
– *How will potential child participants be informed of their rights, the objectives of the process, its conditions and limits, the type of participation expected, as well as the roles and responsibilities of participation stakeholders?*
– *Which process will be implemented to obtain valid and explicit consent from children (and their parents or guardians)?*

COMPONENT NO. 6
Implement the participation process

Even if non participation was eliminated during the planning phase, it is important to avoid falling into the traps of "manipulation" or "tokenism" to save time or due to a lack of resources. Implementing a child participation process takes time, namely because of the need to continuously keep all parties informed, prepare children for the different activities and respond to the various concerns, such as what the children will need to carry out their different tasks. Frequent interruptions, inclusion of handicapped children and taking into account accommodation needs are all factors to consider when planning and implementing the activities.

A child-friendly participation framework means that:

- It offers the protection, safeguards and support needed for all children

- The language and communication techniques used are adapted to the children's abilities and the sociocultural context

- Work methods:
  – Highlight and reinforce children's self-esteem and their contribution to the project
  – Are practical, meaningful, fun and adapted to level of the children
  – Are flexible enough to enable regular reassessments according to children's experiences and concerns
  – Offer equal opportunities to all children to have their rights respected
  – Are based on continuous dialogue with the children

- The place where activities will take place is not unknown to the children

- The facilities, furniture and equipment are adapted to the children and allow them to feel comfortable and at ease.

> **Efficient, child-friendly implementation.**

As soon as activities kick off and throughout the project, it is important to provide each child and groups of children with the maximum amount of information on the nature and context of the activities (risks, consequences, limits, benefits, rewards, etc.), even if this has already been done during the selection phase. The information, which should be communicated using language and a format that is accessible and understandable to children, should include:

- Identification of project participants, including those in charge of making decisions
- The roles of the children, including their eventual role in making decisions during the activity
- The roles and responsibilities of the other children
- The roles and responsibilities of the adults involved
- The type of participation expected
- The duration, location and framework of the activities
- Short- and long-term objectives
- Participation limits
- The children's rights and obligations (including the right to withdraw at any time and the right to privacy)
- The rights and obligations of the adults involved, including the obligation to inform children of the project's outcomes and the impact of their contribution

- The need to obtain valid consent from the children, which they can withdraw at any time and without a need for justification
- Training needed before participating in the project
- Planned measures to minimise risks of harm
- Obstacles that could arise while activities are being implemented
- Applicable rules throughout the process, specifically those relating to safety, respect, equality, inclusion and democracy
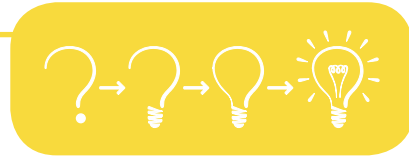- Material and logistical conditions relating to participation (e.g. compensation, lodging, travel, etc.)

Another important element at the beginning of the process, and possibly during each activity, is to specify children's expectations. In addition to being an opportunity to clarify some elements that may have been misunderstood by some of the children, specifying expectations will help prevent any disappointments regarding the project's objectives. The ideas shared by the children can also enhance or broaden objectives and/or activities that have already been identified. Thus, it is important to keep an open mind and to make changes when they are relevant, especially if they are initiated by the children.

The persons in charge of leading and supervising participation activities need to ensure that all children have continuous access to the proper support needed to fully participate in the activities. In general, it may be necessary to use different facilitation and support techniques to increase the quality and efficiency of child participation. For example, planned exercises for a consultation session with a diversity of children must take into account those with reduced mobility or visual impairments by encouraging everyone's participation, and avoiding marginalising some of the children within the group. Remember that each child must receive the same attention and have the same standing in order to foster a spirit of solidarity among the children.

Should the process prove to be inefficient, do not hesitate to suspend the activities and review the implementation strategy. The same goes for the risk mitigation strategy should the guiding principles not be followed or children's rights not be respected. Finally, the implementation must include providing feedback to the children to discuss outcomes, their contribution, necessary adjustments, various concerns, etc.

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 6

– *Have all measures been implemented to create a safe, inclusive and child-friendly environment?*
– *Do all stakeholders know and understand how roles and responsibilities will be shared? Have they validated this?*
– *Have all children (and their parents) received information about participation activities and their rights? Do they understand it?*
– *Have all children (who are capable of doing so) and their parents signed the participation consent form out of their own free will?*
– *Have all the necessary authorisations been obtained?*
– *Have all the activities aimed at preparing children for participation been validated and planned by the team?*
– *Are all the work methods relevant and adapted to the different children involved?*
– *Do the work methods encourage equal participation by all children?*
– *Do the work methods encourage self-esteem and independence for children?*
– *Have all the human resources capable of helping children, especially those who are handicapped, been identified? Are they available?*
– *Do all the persons in charge of leading participation activities know and understand the risk mitigation strategy? Have they agreed to adhere to the IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy (and to the Code of Ethics)?*
– *Do the children involved in participation activities know and understand the risk mitigation strategy?*
– *Are the measures meant to prevent manipulation and tokenisation known and implemented?*
– *Are there emergency measures in place? Are they known and understand by all stakeholders, especially by the children (and their parents)?*

COMPONENT NO. 7
Follow up on the participation process and assess learnings

As with any development activity, those relating to participation must be scrupulously monitored and assessed. It goes without saying that the assessment of the process must include the participation of children and the other project stakeholders.

Because indicators will vary depending on whether or not child participation is a project objective or an outcome, or depending on a way to achieve a wider-reaching safeguarding objective, the team must agree on a monitoring and assessment strategy, which will generally cover two facets:

- Quality of the participation
- Impact of the participation on project outcomes

The premise is that a quality process contribute to reach the project's expected outcomes, whether or not they are specifically related to child participation.

Assessing the quality of the participation process

The quality of the process is measured in light of its compliance to the values and guiding principles stated in the previous sections. In addition, it is closely linked with the quality of risk mitigation measures in place. In general, an efficient child participation process:

- Is relevant and meaningful for the child

- Is carried out with the child's informed consent and free will

- Ensures the child's overall safety

- Takes into account diversity

- Is inclusive and accessible to all children, especially those that are usually excluded or marginalised

- Involves competent personnel

- Includes regular monitoring and assessment.

In all cases, it is important that these indicators be broken down by gender and, when appropriate, by other features that could influence the results of the assessment, such as age, level of education, place of residence, handicap, etc.

Rigorous monitoring and assessment of the process.

In addition, the impact of the process on adults involved can also serve as an indicator of the quality of the process. For example, the level of improvement of child communication skills or the knowledge of the potential benefits associated with child participation are, without a doubt, indicators of the process' success.

Assessing the impact of child participation on project outcomes

The added value of child participation in the attainment of a project's objectives is not a theoretical concept. It can and should be verified in order to document the experience and gain knowledge of the good, and not so good, practices.
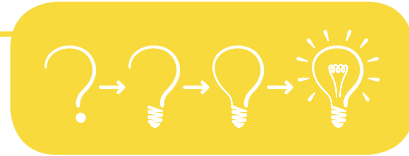
That being said, it is not always easy to clearly establish a link between child participation and the quality of the project's outcomes. Many factors, which are unrelated to the child, can affect the project's outcomes, especially when child participation only takes place for a fraction of the activities carried out. Furthermore, the child participation objectives of some projects are not always clearly identified, while others only refer to quantitative results that assume that child participation had positive effects. For example: "X children participated in discussion groups." So how to properly assess a child's actual contribution to a project?

Even if it makes the assessment more complex, a lack of basic data or of lessons learned from previous similar projects is not an insurmountable obstacle. Even if you cannot compare activities with or without child participation, you can assess those contributions that were only made possible by children and how they could potentially alter the project outcomes or the initial implementation strategy.

Child participation is unavoidable during the assessment of the project's outcomes. It is particularly unavoidable when identifying or validating which indicators will be used to measure the level at which project objectives have been attained.

The following table includes examples of criteria to consider during the assessments[37].

QUESTIONS – COMPONENT NO. 7

A. ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Relevance and meaningfulness of the participation process for the child

— *Level of connectivity between the <u>purpose</u> of the process and the child's history and experiences*
— *Level of connectivity between participation <u>activities</u> and the child's history and experiences*
— *Relevance of the participation process' purpose to the child (e.g. reinforcement of capacities, self-esteem, information, awareness, independence, citizenship, etc.)*
— *The impact of the participation process on the child*
— *The impact of the participation process on the child's family*
— *The impact of the participation process on the child's sociopolitical environment*
— *Number and quality of training activities for the child during the participation process*
— *Number of children (according to gender) who are satisfied with their participation experience (including preliminary training activities)*
— *Level of consistency between the profiles of participating children and the purpose of the process*
— *Type of process: one-time activity or continuous involvement*
— *Type of participation: consultative, collaborative or child-led*
— *For continuous participation: differences in types of participation (e.g. from consultative to collaborative)*
— *Level of child participation in decision-making (e.g. choosing the type and timing of participation; choosing child participants; choosing participation activities; adjustments during the process; monitoring and assessment)*
— *Number, quality and frequency of reporting to children*
— *Level of attainment of expected results*

Informed child consent given of free will

— *Nature and frequency of information shared with the child (and her or his parents) and communication methods used*
— *Nature and quality of measures implemented to ensure reliability of consent*
— *Nature and quality of monitoring measures for the child's consent*
— *Child's level of knowledge of her or his rights*

Overall safety of the child

– *Number and nature of child-friendly measures (including assistance and support) that were implemented where activities took place*
– *Quality of selected methodology for the activities, taking into account children's specificities*
– *Number and quality of measures taken after risk analysis and assessment of participation opportunities*
– *Number and quality of risk mitigation strategy monitoring and assessment activities for child participation*
– *Level of precision for roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in the participation process*
– *Number of personnel hired exclusively to ensure child safety*
– *Level of competence of personnel in charge of leading activities with children*
– *Level of competence of personnel in charge of child safety*
– *Number and quality of measures implemented in case of conflict or emergency*
– *Number and quality of measures implemented for follow-up with children at the end of the participation process*

Diversity of selected children

– *Number and profiles of selected children*
– *Level of diversity of the selection criteria (age, origin, level of education, etc.)*
– *Level of representativeness of selected children (e.g. group representatives chosen by children or adults)*
– *Nature and quality of measures implemented and tools used to select child participants*
– *Number and profile of children having participated in the selection process*

Inclusion of children from groups that are normally marginalised or vulnerable

– *Number and profiles of children from traditionally excluded or marginalised groups*
– *Number and quality of measures implemented to encourage the participation of children from these groups (including selection tools)*
– *Number and quality of mechanisms implemented to encourage the participation of children from these groups (including methodology, environment, accommodations, professional assistance, etc.)*

Competent personnel

– *Number of personnel with meaningful child participation experience*
– *Number and nature of reinforcement activities for personnel involved in the participation process*
– *Profile of personnel involved in the participation process*
– *Level of awareness of personnel to child rights and participation*
– *Number of personnel who have signed the Code of Ethics and committed to respecting it*
– *Impact of the process on the organisation's personnel*

Participation process monitoring and assessment mechanisms

– *Number and profile of children involved in the assessment*
– *Number and quality of measures implemented to support children involved in the assessment*
– *Types of child participation in the assessment*
– *Number and level of competency of human resources dedicated to the assessment*
– *Number and quality of assessment tools (e.g. child-friendly)*
– *Level of consideration of gender-specific components in the assessment tools*
– *Frequency of monitoring and assessment activities*
– *Number of meeting areas and summary documents to leverage lessons learned and learnings*

B. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHILD PARTICIPATION ON PROJECT OUTCOMES

– *Impact of the process on the organisational culture*
– *Level of attainment of objectives or expected results*
– *Number and profiles of children involved in assessing the level of attainment of project objectives and outcomes*
– *Types of child participation in the assessment*
– *Number and quality of measures implemented to support children involved in the assessment*
– *Number and level of competency of human resources dedicated to the assessment*
– *Number and quality of assessment tools (e.g. child-friendly)*
– *Number of areas available for reporting project outcomes to children and other stakeholders*
– *Level of consideration of gender-specific components in the assessment tools*
– *Frequency of monitoring and assessment activities*
– *Number of meeting areas and summary documents to leverage lessons learned and learnings*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CHILD PARTICIPATION IN IBCR PROJECTS – SOME EXAMPLES

PROJECTS	YEARS	OBJECTIVES	CHILD PARTICIPATION
1. Development of audiovisual training tools (Burkina Faso and DRC)	2017-2018	Illustrate and enhance the content of training toolkits through the participation of children.	**Burkina Faso** 40 girls and 40 boys took part in the development of audiovisual tools. **DRC** 70% of girls and boys who participated in the project felt that their experience was taken into account when preparing the scripts for the training tools. Four audiovisual activities per toolkit were produced with the participation of children.
2. Collaborative mission between the IBCR and UNICEF/Bangladesh	2017	Gather information needed to draft a preliminary report and a proposal for future collaboration between both organisations.	Consultations with a group of teenagers in a working-class neighbourhood within the capital.
3. Studying violence against children in Madagascar	2016-2017	Reinforce the child protection system.	Key informers worked with children to document their views on violence against children. Discussion groups were held to analyse the causes and consequences of violence and to produce recommended action plans.
4. "Carrefour carrières" event at Stanislas College	2016	Inform students about career opportunities in international relations and cooperation.	Discussions with teens about the various opportunities in international relations and cooperation.
5. Child participation training workshop	2016	Train IBCR personnel on child participation.	Training workshop led by Rachel Thibault for IBCR personnel.
6. Assessment of the juvenile justice system (Djibouti, Madagascar, Morocco, Angola)	2015-2016	Analyse how the juvenile justice system works. Draft concrete recommendations on policies, structures, procedures and management practices pertaining to children in contact with the law.	Consultations with children and teenagers on the effectiveness of their justice system.

PROJECTS	YEARS	OBJECTIVES	CHILD PARTICIPATION
7. Young peoples' accounts and participation in the justice system: Judicial trajectories of child victims and witnesses of crime in Quebec (BAVAC), Quebec	2015	Improve understanding of what has facilitated or hindered youth participation in the criminal justice process. Offer young victims and witnesses of crime the opportunity to express their opinions on the justice system. Prepare recommendations based on feedback from youth.	Consultations with children and teenagers who have been victims of a criminal offence, on their experience with the adult and juvenile justice system.
8. Capacity building for the child protection system	Afghanistan (2015-2016) Benin (2015-2017) Burkina Faso (2015-2020) Burundi (2013-2015) Cameroon (2012-2014) Costa Rica (2015-2019) Côte-d'Ivoire (2012-2015) Djibouti (2015-2018) Ghana (2014-2015) Guinea (2012-2014) Honduras (2016-2022) Iraq (2013-2014) Jordan (2013-2014) Libya (2014) Morocco (2016) Niger (2011-2013) Nigeria (2012-2013) Senegal (2012-2014) Democratic Republic of the Congo (2015-2020) Chad (2013-2016) Togo (2012-2017) Tunisia (2014) Yemen (2013-2015)	Permanently incorporate training on the rights and protection of children into various teaching programmes for police, gendarmes, social workers, and military and justice personnel. Reinforce the capacities of the instructors working in these training centres.	Consultations with children (aged 8-18) on their views about the work of security forces, justice personnel and social workers.
9. Children's rights capacity reinforcement project for peacekeepers in Western and Eastern Africa	2013-2016	Provide rapid deployment forces with uniform training tools and strategies.	Consultations were held to gather the perspectives of children in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, which led to the production of audio-visual material that enhanced the training toolkits.

PROJECTS	YEARS	OBJECTIVES	CHILD PARTICIPATION
10. Combatting child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism in Costa Rica	2012-2014	Prevent the sexual exploitation of children in the travel and tourism industry in Costa Rica.	Participation of various groups of children (specifically young surfers) as actors to raise awareness about the informal tourism sector that includes taxi drivers, surfing instructions, artists and beach vendors who often act as intermediaries between children and tourists. Involvement of these children in various planning and awareness activities as well as in the analysis of results.
11. Increasing the accountability of financial decision-makers with respect to budgetary decisions involving children	2013	Support the GIZ in its efforts to incorporate child-adapted budgetisation into its capacity reinforcement programme for Burkina Faso's Ministry of Economy and Finance.	Simulation, with about 15 children, of inter-ministerial decision-making sessions for the allocation of state funds, to improve the taking into account of children's rights. Involvement of these children in drafting of recommendations to the GIZ for child-adapted budgetisation.
12. Contest for grade 10 and 11 students	2011-2013	Raise awareness and inform teenagers about children's rights.	In cooperation with EDUCALOI, the teens were invited to write their opinions on one of four scenarios about children's rights. The Bureau sat on the selection committee. Prizes were awarded to the authors of the winning texts.
13. Study on child sexual exploitation in Burundi	2011-2012	Determine the extent and manifestations of commercial child sexual exploitation in Burundi and identify children at risk of becoming victims. The study also shined a spotlight on the type of people involved, the places where exploitation occurs, the processes by which children become victims and measures for preventing this phenomenon.	More than 350 boys and girls in jail, victims of sexual exploitation, living or working on the streets, working as hired help, in the fisheries or other industries took part in this study, which led to the production of a report and recommendations to have their views heard.
14. National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Programme, Democratic Republic of the Congo	2011	Assess the programme's child-related component.	Consultations with a dozen children taking part in the DDR to document their experience and assess the programme's performance.

PROJECTS	YEARS	OBJECTIVES	CHILD PARTICIPATION
15. Conferences on the role of civil society in monitoring children's rights	Colombia and Venezuela (2009-2011)	Conferences in universities with students to discuss how civil society could play a more constructive role in the monitoring children's rights.	Involvement of various youth groups through a collaboration with Canadian embassies in Bogota and Caracas.
16. MANARA project, North Africa and the Middle East	2008-2012	Create a regional network of civil society organisations sharing a common interest in making children's rights a reality by strengthening the capacities of those local organisations in the following areas: Analysis and preparation of reports Coordination and networking Advocacy activities Systematic integration of children's rights into national programmes.	Data collection led by children: after being trained by NGOs, groups of children collected data from their peers about the issues they dealt with daily. Afterward, the youngsters analysed the results and validated them with their peers in order to prepare advocacy activities. A methodology handbook was produced in English and Arabic.
17. Workshop on the reintegration of children affected by armed conflict, Ottawa	2008	Determine challenges surrounding the reintegration of children, specifically with respect to girls' rights, difficulties relating to social and psychological reintegration, programme financing limits and options for cooperation with peacekeeping missions.	Participation and accounts by children affected by armed conflict.
18. Country profiles	North Africa (2006) African Great Lakes Region (2008)	Analyse the experience of various countries within a same region in implementing their commitments toward children's rights.	Consultations with dozens of girls and boys in six countries to document their views on the issues they face in order to have their rights respected.
19. Child trafficking in Quebec	2004-2009	Prevent child trafficking. Reduce criminal acts by promoting a better understanding of child trafficking issues. Enhance the capacities of actors to protect child trafficking victims.	Consultations with several dozen high school students on training tools and modules. Event to raise awareness on the trafficking of young girls, during which the play "Amour ou domination"? "L'histoire de Florence et Gabriel", which was written and performed by Mise au jeu, was presented. An activity where participants were invited to step into the shoes of the play's characters was held, prompting young audience members to reflect on what they would have done in their place.

PROJECTS	YEARS	OBJECTIVES	CHILD PARTICIPATION
20. "Children's Voices" play	2000	Produce a play about child trafficking.	Participants aged 10-17 were invited to write and present the play. In collaboration with Montreal's Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts Youth Institute, in connection with the Winnipeg conference on children affected by war.
21. International conference on children affected by war, Winnipeg	2000	Leverage the participation of children and their experience throughout the conference.	Participation of 50 children in the conference.
22. Le Petit Journal television show (Télévision Quatre-Saisons)	2000	Inform the public and raise awareness about child participation.	Participation of children who attended the conference in Winnipeg to discuss their experience.
23. Workshop at Montreal's "Fête des enfants"	2000	Inform children and raise awareness about children's rights.	Discussions with children about the CRC. Children's drawings on two murals that were then used by the IBCR for public events.
24. Hearings at the International Tribunal for Children's Rights on the protection of children affected by armed conflict	1999	Assess whether international human rights laws offered enough protection to children living in areas of armed conflict. Assess whether these international and regional laws are adequate.	Accounts of children from Northern Ireland to be included in the hearings.
25. "The Rights of the Child in the New Millenium" international conference	1999	Share information about child poverty, sexual exploitation of children and child victims of armed conflicts.	Children's accounts of the various subjects discussed.

APPENDIX 2

THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

General Comment No. 12 – Committee on the Rights of the Child[38]

This document remains an important reference tool for child participation as it contains relevant information on how to interpret and apply Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child[39]. It also includes a definition of child participation, which extends its scope by stating that participation is not just a process to be contemplated but rather an end goal. Furthermore, the document presents an in-depth analysis of the main components of Article 12 and includes concrete examples to better understand what is involved in a child's right to be heard, especially for representatives of the CRC's States Parties. Child participation in legal proceedings, both civil and criminal, is also discussed and an entire section is devoted to establishing links between Article 12 and other rights mentioned in the Convention.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[40]

Adopted in 1979, the CEDAW focuses on issues surrounding equality between men/boys and women/girls. This international instrument includes an introduction and 30 articles, including one that defines discrimination against women and girls. The CEDAW also presents national policy guidelines to help States in their fight against gender-based discrimination, for equal rights to be realised.

Among the various interesting elements contained within the CEDAW, it considers that, above and beyond legislations, the actual living conditions and situations of women and girls are the best indicators of the respect of equal rights. These rights need to be applied both in public and in private.

Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime[41]

Developed by the IBCR in 2005 and adopted by the United Nations, the Guidelines are aimed at persons who work with child victims or witnesses of crime so that they may consider the best interests of the child during legal proceedings. The approach is innovative in that it considers the child as an active player throughout the process, and not as a peripheral component during the trial.

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38. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf

39. More specifically, it aims to: "a) Strengthen understanding of the meaning of Article 12 and its implications for governments, stakeholders, NGOs and society at large; b) Elaborate the scope of legislation, policy and practice necessary to achieve full implementation of Article 12; c) Highlight the positive approaches in implementing Article 12, benefitting from the monitoring experience of the Committee; d) Propose basic requirements for appropriate ways to give due weight to children's views in all matters that affect them."

40. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 18 December 1979, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx. See also the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, which includes a definition of violence against women.

41. *Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime*, page 10. www.ibcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/United-Nations-guidelines-on-justice-in-matters-involving-child-victims-english-2.pdf

APPENDIX 3

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION ACCORDING TO HART'S LADDER – DEFINITIONS[42]

8. CHILD-INITIATED AND CHILD-DIRECTED PROJECT	The entire project is initiated and controlled by children.
7. CHILD-INITIATED PROJECT, SHARED DECISIONS WITH ADULTS	The project is initiated by children, but strategic decisions are taken in collaboration with adults.
6. ADULT-INITIATED PROJECT, SHARED DECISIONS WITH CHILDREN	As its name suggests, the project is initiated by adults, but they share decision-making powers with children.
5. CHILDREN CONSULTED AND INFORMED	The project is developed and directed by adults, but children understand the process and their views are taken seriously.
4. CHILDREN ASSIGNED BUT INFORMED	At this level, children understand the project's objectives. They know who makes decisions about their participation and why. They plan a meaningful role (not decoration). They volunteer to participate in the project once their role has been explained to them. Children who were pages during the World Summit for Children in New York are an example of this type of participation.

NON-PARTICIPATION

TOKENISM	In these situations, children appear to be given a voice, but in reality they have few choices with respect to the issue at hand and communication methods, and limited opportunities to express their views. For example: When intelligent, charming children are selected by adults to sit on a panel without having been properly informed about the subject debated or without having had a chance to discuss the issue with other children they are supposed to represent.
DECORATION	Applies to frequent situations where children are given t-shirts during a protest – the children dance and sign but have only a vague idea of what is going on and they don't participate in organising the event. Adults don't claim that the initiative is children-led, but they use them to support their cause in a relatively indirect way.
MANIPULATION	In these situations, children do not understand the cause at hand. They are instructed to participate in the project by adults. For example: preschool children who carry political posters about the importance of social policies for children.

42. Published in UNICEF's *Every Child* magazine, UNICEF, April-June 1992

APPENDIX 4

COMPONANTE NO. 1: OPPORTUNITIES TO INCLUDE CHILD PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES	Opportunities for inclusion (YES/NO)	V	C	AI	P	CI	FP
Situation assessment							
Basic training toolkit							
Continuous training toolkit							
Specialised training toolkit							
Validation workshops							
Guidance/start-up workshops							
Thematic workshops							
Development workshops							
Pilot training workshops							
Brainstorming workshops (regional or international)							
Observation visits							
Assessment reports							
Focus group							
Interviews							
Development of policies and guidelines							
Field missions							
Data collection							
Advocacy							
Publications							
Research reports							
Identification of child participants							
Training of instructors							
Pilot courses							
Development of audiovisual training tools							

V	Voluntary	P	Partnership
C	Consultation	CI	Child-Led Initiative
AI	Adult-Led Initiative	FP	Full Participation

APPENDIX 5

COMPONANTE NO. 3: OPPORTUNITIES TO INCLUDE CHILD PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES	Opportunities for inclusion (YES/NO)	V	C	AI	P	CI	FP
Situation assessment							
Basic training toolkit							
Continuous training toolkit							
Specialised training toolkit							
Validation workshops							
Guidance/start-up workshops							
Thematic workshops							
Development workshops							
Pilot training workshops							
Brainstorming workshops (regional or international)							
Observation visits							
Assessment reports							
Focus group							
Interviews							
Development of policies and guidelines							
Field missions							
Data collection							
Advocacy							
Publications							
Research reports							
Identification of child participants							
Training of instructors							
Pilot courses							
Development of audiovisual training tools							

V	Voluntary	**P**	Partnership
C	Consultation	**CI**	Child-Led Initiative
AI	Adult-Led Initiative	**FP**	Full Participation

RISK ANALYSIS MATRIX

Risk category	Types of risks	Possible harm	Risk level 1: Low 2: Medium 3: High	Risk probability 1: Low 2: Medium 3: High	Mitigation measures (short term)	Mitigation measures (long term)	Analysis date
Physical	Fall/accident	Minor and major injuries, death					
	Physical security/integrity	Reprisals, minor and major injuries, arrests, detention, death, etc.					
	Health risk	Fatigue, illness, etc.					
Environmental	Sociopolitical conflict	Minor and major injuries, kidnapping, death					
	Epidemic	Infections					
	Natural disaster (storm, flood, etc.)	Minor and major injuries, death					
Psychosocial	Fragile psychological state	Insomnia, depression, loss of self-esteem, etc.					
	Emotional content	Depression, revictimisation, etc.					
	Inappropriate context or conditions surrounding participation activities	Loss of self-esteem, insecurity, distress, etc.					
	Exposure to potentially traumatising, harmful or intrusive situations	Insomnia, depression, fear, anxiety, etc.					
Resources	Lack of trained, competent personnel	Insecurity, psychological distress, loss of trust, meaningless experience					
	Lack of supervision	Insecurity, disorganisation, negative experience					
	Lack of materials and equipment	Lack of interest, health and/or safety risks					
	Lack of emergency measures	Health and/or safety risks					

ANNEXE 7

COMPONENT 1	QUESTIONS TO ASK
ASSESS THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCLUDE CHILD PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT'S CYCLE (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	– *What are the project objectives?* – *Are the objectives aimed at the short-term improvement of a group of children's situation? The long-term improvement?* – *Are children directly or indirectly affected by the project's objectives?* – *If children are indirectly affected, which group will be directly affected? What is its link to the children?* – *In which context or situation do these groups interact with children?* – *What are the objectives and the expected outcomes of the participation process?*[43] – *How will child participation help meet the project's objectives and outcomes? What is its added value?* – *What type of data or information (qualitative, quantitative) is required from the children? (e.g. get feedback about a certain subject, hear about children's experiences with violence, understand the needs and expectations of children with respect to a specific service, etc.)* – *Which approach would be best-suited for the project's objectives? One-time participation or continuous participation (for a long-term initiative)?* – *At which phase of the project would it be useful for children to participate?* – *At which phase of the project would it be safest for children to participate?* – *During which activities is child participation needed?* – *During which activities would child participation be the most useful (but not critical)?* – *What is sought by having boys and girls participate? (e.g. capacity reinforcement, improvement of self-esteem, empowerment, capacity for self-protection, etc.)* – *What do the participation activities offer to boys? To girls? How are the issues involved important for them?* – *How will their participation be relevant to them?* – *How will their participation be meaningful to them?* – *Will their participation have a positive impact on their current living conditions and/or their overall situation (family, social, etc.)?* – *Which project components or activities would most lead to a meaningful participation for children*

43. If the logical framework does not provide further insight on this aspect, identify child participation objectives and outcomes.

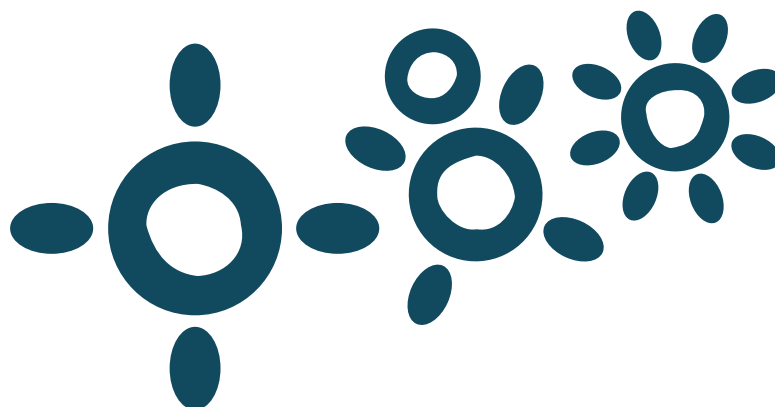| COMPONENT 2	QUESTIONS TO ASK
ANALYSE RISKS AND POTENTIAL HARM CAUSED BY THE CHILD'S PARTICIPATION (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	***Environmental and physical safety diagnosis*** – *Will the child be exposed to an environmental hazard or natural disaster? Specify.* – *Are there any risks for the child's physical well-being (e.g. risk of injury, infection, fatigue, etc.)? Specify.* – *Will the child's participation cause a negative reaction from his parents or legal guardians?* – *Does the child have any special physical needs?* – *Does the context of participation create an inadequate promiscuity or contacts that could be harmful to the child's physical well-being?* – *Are there any risks of reprisals against the child (or his or her family) because of his or her participation (teaching personnel, religious leaders, political leaders, other children, etc.)?* – *Are there any risks of abuse or exploitation from personnel involved in the participation process?* – *Have all the persons involved signed and acknowledged the Code of Ethics?* – *Are there risks of stigmatisation if the child participates?* – *Are there risks that the child will once again be victimised?* – *Does the proposed methodology ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the child?* ***Psychosocial diagnosis*** – *What is the child's psychological state?* – *Does the child have any special psychological needs?* – *Is the theory discussed during the participation process appropriate or adapted to the child's evolving capacities and developmental stage? (e.g. sexuality, explicit/implicit violence, emotions, personal experience with violence, drugs, etc.)* – *Will the child be at risk of being exposed to potentially harmful or intrusive situations?* – *Has the child provided valid consent? What is his or her motivation?* – *Does the context of participation create an inadequate promiscuity or contacts that could be harmful to the child's mental well-being?* – *Are the participation activities child friendly and mindful of the child's needs and specificities?* ***Diagnosis of available resources and support*** – *Are there enough competent human resources to properly implement the participation process?* – *Who is responsible for child safeguarding issues within the organisation? For this project?* – *Are there enough competent human resources to quickly intervene should an incident or emergency occur?[44]* – *Are there enough material resources available to properly implement the process? (e.g. transportation, accommodations, meals, etc.)* – *Are there enough human and material resources to supervise, follow up and assess the process?* – *Are there tools (safeguards) to inform the child and obtain proper consent? (e.g. consent form, informative pamphlet on children's rights, complaint procedure, etc.)*

COMPONENT 3	QUESTIONS TO ASK
CHOOSE THE FORMS AND LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	– *Is additional research or an external resource necessary to define which levels of participation are possible or which should be considered in light of the circumstances?* – *What are the comparative advantages and disadvantages between the different possible forms of child participation? And for the project?* – *Which forms of participation are possible following the results of the risk analysis, the context, project circumstances, and the* child profiles sought*? For example, do participation levels take into account the child's age, evolving capacities and specific situations?* – *Which forms of participation are the most likely to help reach objectives for the child?* – *Which forms of participation are the most likely to help reach project objectives?* – *What is the expected duration of child participation? Is it a one-time participation or a continuous participation?* – *Which support is available and which support needs to be implemented (including availability of information for children) to fully encourage this form of participation?* – *Which additional supports should be implemented to fully encourage the participation of girls or marginalised children?6* – *What needs to be implemented according to the chosen forms of participation?* – *Which tools and resources are needed and which are available for the chosen forms of participation?*

COMPONENT 4	QUESTIONS TO ASK
DEVELOP A RISK MITIGATION AND MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION STRATEGY (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	– *Taking into account issues surrounding the children's physical safety, which safeguards need to be put in place to mitigate child participation risk factors and possible negative consequences?* – *Taking into account issues linked to the children's psychological well-being, which safeguards need to be put in place to mitigate child participation risk factors and possible negative consequences?* – *Taking into account issues surrounding the children's family and social well-being, which safeguards need to be put in place to mitigate child participation risk factors and possible negative consequences?* – *Which resources (human, material, etc.) are needed to implement risk mitigation measures? Are they available?* – *Which measures will be taken to implement a child-friendly environment?* – *Which measures will be taken to protect children's personal information and privacy?* – *How will child protection issues be taken into account when hiring personnel for the participation process?* – *What are the training needs for personnel involved in the participation process?* – *What are the training needs for children involved in the participation process?* – *What needs to be implemented to support children and meet their needs and concerns before, during and after the process?* – *What type of monitoring and/or support are needed for the children's families or communities at the end of the participation process?* – *Are the IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy standards known and understood by personnel and children involved in the participation process?* – *How will children be informed of their rights and recourses during the participation process?* – *Are there proper tools and forms to obtain informed consent from children (and their parents)?* – *Are the roles and responsibilities of all project stakeholders defined and understood by the personnel involved? By the children?* – *Have the project stakeholders, including the children, approved the risk mitigation strategy and its related measures?*

COMPONENT 5	QUESTIONS TO ASK
SELECT PARTICIPATING CHILDREN (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	– *Who is involved and responsible for selecting child participants?* – *Who are the civil society organisation and/or community representatives who will help select child participants?* – *What are the needs of those involved in and responsible for selecting child participants?* – *How many children are needed?* – *Are specific profiles sought after, taking into account the context and objectives of the participation process? The project? If the answer is "yes," what are the profiles sought? Why?* – *Should some child profiles be excluded given the context and circumstances of the participation process? If the answer is "yes," which ones? Why?* – *Will the children involved have enough time to participate without too much interference with their schedule (learning, professional, recreational activities)?* – *In addition to safety measures, which measures will be implemented to guarantee the selection takes into account the diversity of children and integrates those who are normally excluded from participation initiatives?* – *Which measures will be implemented to encourage equal participation by girls and boys?* – *What resources are available for the selection of child participants? Are they sufficient?* – *How will potential child participants be informed of their rights, the objectives of the process, its conditions and limits, the type of participation expected, as well as the roles and responsibilities of participation stakeholders?* – *Which process will be implemented to obtain valid and explicit consent from children (and their parents or guardians)?*

COMPONENT 6	QUESTIONS TO ASK
IMPLEMENT THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	– *Have all measures been implemented to create a safe, inclusive and child-friendly environment?* – *Do all stakeholders know and understand how roles and responsibilities will be shared? Have they validated this?* – *Have all children (and their parents) received information about participation activities and their rights? Do they understand it?* – *Have all children (who are capable of doing so) and their parents signed the participation consent form out of their own free will?* – *Have all the necessary authorisations been obtained?* – *Have all the activities aimed at preparing children for participation been validated and planned by the team?* – *Are all the work methods relevant and adapted to the different children involved?* – *Do the work methods encourage equal participation by all children?* – *Do the work methods encourage self-esteem and independence for children?* – *Have all the human resources capable of helping children, especially those who are handicapped, been identified? Are they available?* – *Do all the persons in charge of leading participation activities know and understand the risk mitigation strategy? Have they agreed to adhere to the IBCR Child Safeguarding Policy (and to the Code of Ethics)?* – *Do the children involved in participation activities know and understand the risk mitigation strategy?* – *Are the measures meant to prevent manipulation and tokenism known and implemented?* – *Are there emergency measures in place? Are they known and understand by all stakeholders, especially by the children (and their parents)?*

COMPONENT 7	QUESTIONS TO ASK
FOLLOW UP ON THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND ASSESS LEARNINGS (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected)	**A. ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS** *Relevance and meaningfulness of the participation process for the child* – *Level of connectivity between the <u>purpose</u> of the process and the child's history and experiences* – *Level of connectivity between participation <u>activities</u> and the child's history and experiences* – *Relevance of the participation process' purpose to the child (e.g. reinforcement of capacities, self-esteem, information, awareness, independence, citizenship, etc.)* – *The impact of the participation process on the child* – *The impact of the participation process on the child's family* – *The impact of the participation process on the child's sociopolitical environment* – *Number and quality of training activities for the child during the participation process* – *Number of children (according to gender) who are satisfied with their participation experience (including preliminary training activities)* – *Level of consistency between the profiles of participating children and the purpose of the process* – *Type of process: one-time activity or continuous involvement* – *Type of participation: consultative, collaborative or child-led* – *For continuous participation: differences in types of participation (e.g. from consultative to collaborative)* – *Level of child participation in decision-making (e.g. choosing the type and timing of participation; choosing child participants; choosing participation activities; adjustments during the process; monitoring and assessment)* – *Number, quality and frequency of reporting to children* – *Level of attainment of expected results* *Informed child consent given of free will* – *Informed child consent given of free will* – *Nature and frequency of information shared with the child (and her or his parents) and communication methods used* – *Nature and quality of measures implemented to ensure reliability of consent* – *Nature and quality of monitoring measures for the child's consent* – *Child's level of knowledge of her or his rights* *Overall safety of the child* – *Overall safety of the child* – *Number and nature of child-friendly measures (including assistance and support) that were implemented where activities took place* – *Quality of selected methodology for the activities, taking into account children's specificities* – *Number and quality of measures taken after risk analysis and assessment of participation opportunities* – *Number and quality of risk mitigation strategy monitoring and assessment activities for child participation* – *Level of precision for roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in the participation process* – *Number of personnel hired exclusively to ensure child safety* – *Level of competence of personnel in charge of leading activities with children* – *Level of competence of personnel in charge of child safety* – *Number and quality of measures implemented in case of conflict or emergency* – *Number and quality of measures implemented for follow-up with children at the end of the participation process*

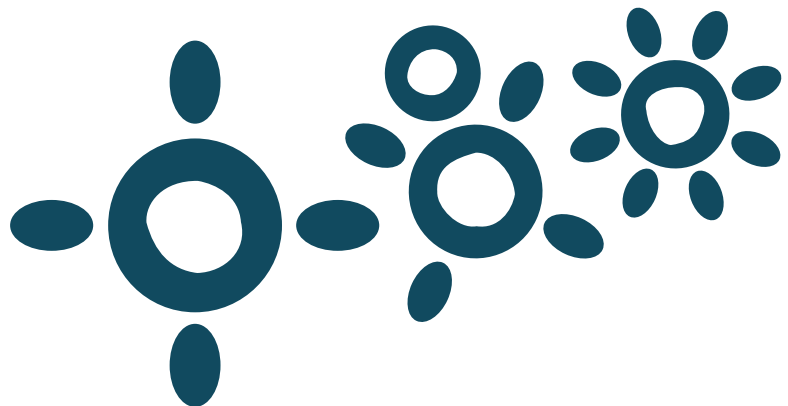| COMPONENT 7	QUESTIONS TO ASK
FOLLOW UP ON THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND ASSESS LEARNINGS (Ensure children's rights and child participation guiding principles are respected) (*continued*)	***B. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHILD PARTICIPATION ON PROJECT OUTCOMES*** – *Impact of the process on the organisational culture* – *Level of attainment of objectives or expected results* – *Number and profiles of children involved in assessing the level of attainment of project objectives and outcomes* – *Types of child participation in the assessment* – *Number and quality of measures implemented to support children involved in the assessment* – *Number and level of competency of human resources dedicated to the assessment* – *Number and quality of assessment tools (e.g. child-friendly)* – *Number of areas available for reporting project outcomes to children and other stakeholders* – *Level of consideration of gender-specific components in the assessment tools* – *Frequency of monitoring and assessment activities* – *Number of meeting areas and summary documents to leverage lessons learned and learnings*

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